









# BEFORE AN AUDIENCE;

OR,

## THE USE OF THE WILL IN PUBLIC SPEAKING.

TALKS TO THE STUDENTS OF  
THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS AND  
THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN.

BY

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HIMSELF;" "THE DICKENS READER;" "CHARACTER READINGS FROM  
GEORGE ELIOT;" AND "GEORGE ELIOT'S ESSAYS."

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**Dedicated**

**TO THE MEMORY OF**

**JOHN TULLOCH, D.D.,**

**PRINCIPAL OF ST. MARY'S COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF ST.**

**ANDREWS, BUT FOR WHOSE WORDS OF COMMENDA-**

**TION AND ENCOURAGEMENT THESE TALKS**

**WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN**

**PUBLISHED.**





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## INTRODUCTORY.

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WHEN I was lecturing in Great Britain I gave these talks on Public Speaking to the students of the University of St. Andrews and the students of the University of Aberdeen. I was so much encouraged by the commendation they received from, not only the students, but the principals and professors who did me the honor to attend, that I continued to give them at other universities and colleges, notably at Allegheny College, Meadville, Pa., where I spent some of the happiest hours of my life as a lecturer and teacher.

They were fragmentary then, they are fragmentary now. So is all truth, so are all facts.

What I say in these talks I say from experience, from a long, hard-earned, and painful experience. I know something of the ecstasy that accompanies success, and I have had my share of the torture that comes with failure in this perplexing and elusive art.

When I made up my mind to devote my mind and body to public speaking, I was told by my tutors and governors that I would certainly fail ; that my articulation was a failure, and it was ; that my voice was feeble, and it was ; that my organs of speech were inadequate, and they were ; and that if I would screw up my little mouth it could be put into my mother's thimble, and it could. Stinging words these certainly were, and cruel ones. I shall never forget them ; possibly,

however, they stung me into a persistency which I would never have known but for these words. At all events, that is the philosophy of the "self-made" world of mankind. I may not have accomplished much, I do not claim to have accomplished much. It is something to have made a living out of my art for twenty years, and that I do claim to have done in spite of every obstacle and every discouragement by the method herein recommended to others, by turning my will upon my voice and vocal organs, by cultivating my elocutionary instinct and my ear for the cadences of rhetoric, by knowing what I and my voice and my feelings were about, by making the most of myself.

I increased my voice tenfold, doubled my chest, and brought my unoratorical organs somewhat into subjection to my will. If I had taken the common advice and "forgotten myself," I would have lost myself and my bread and butter. If I had been "wholly absorbed in my subject," my subject would have been wholly absorbed in my epiglottis. If I had contented myself with acquiring the "emphasis" or "rendering" of Hamlet's soliloquy, or Tell's address to the mountains, as furnished by the professional emphasers and renderers, I would never have earned enough by public speaking to keep my family on oatmeal.

However, I have no quarrel with the elocutionists so long as they keep to their own, and by no means unimportant, sphere—the teaching of acting and dramatic reading. But I do not believe that they can teach a man how to deliver his own speech by teaching him the rendering of another man's oration—especially if, as is generally the case, the other man's composition, with which they coach their pupils, is in the highest form of dramatic poetry instead of the commonplace form of

one's own discourse. Dramatic recitation is a side-show, public speaking is the serious business of life. In fact, I do not believe that the art of public speaking can be taught by any one, and certainly not by one who knows nothing about it from actual experience. I do not profess in these pages to teach it. I am simply trying here to give the speaker some hints by which he shall see how he can teach himself.

My subject is not elocution, or emphasis, or dramatic reading, or gesticulation, but public speaking. My object is not the training of the arms or legs, or larynx, or the facial muscles. My object is not to lay on rules from without, but to awaken the will and the instincts that the speaker finds within. I would induce him to cultivate his will, his ear for his elocution, and his eye for his audience. I would have him know what he is about, and how to make the most of himself when he gets upon his legs before an audience. I do not propose to teach him how to entertain by a display of elocutionary recitations, which is child's play, but to give him some suggestions that may enable him to reach, and move, and influence men by means of sermon, lecture, speech, or plea, which is man's work. What I have found indispensable to myself I here publish for the benefit of others—of those, at any rate, who are young enough to be ignorant, and teachable enough to admit it.





## BEFORE AN AUDIENCE.

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### I.

#### A GOOD SPEAKING VOICE TO BE ACQUIRED BY AN EXERCISE OF THE WILL.

A FEW, a very few public speakers have what the public speaker needs first of all, and in many cases most of all—a good speaking voice, a suitable and adequate voice for public speaking. A few, a very few comparatively, have such a voice by Nature ; and even where Nature confers the blessing of a voice of adequate strength, she seldom adds the desirable flexibility or modulation. So, whether it be a stronger voice or a more manageable one that the speaker needs, his only method of acquiring it is that of willing it into his possession. I say the only method, because this is the only method by which the speaker is enabled to appropriate, and really make his own, the new and necessary voice. All other methods fail in this crucial test of appropriation.

Take, for example, the method of imitative elocution. It proceeds upon the fallacious assumption that a good speaking voice may be acquired by acquiring the voice of an actor or elocutionist, and that in order to teach the art of Public Speaking you have only to teach the art of

**Imitative Elocution will not answer.**

dramatic recitation. The failure of this method is no more conspicuous than the reason for the failure. The dramatic reader does not appropriate the voice which he has acquired by imitation from his "lessons in elocution." He does not assimilate it, does not make it his own. He cannot converse in it. It is the voice of a "part," which the reciter or actor is playing. You will notice that the voice with which the dramatic reader informs the audience what he intends to read is a very different voice from that with which he reads. It is only while the student in elocution is "speaking his piece" under the tuition of his coacher that he speaks in the dignified bass or the melodious baritone. If he happens to discuss the method he is pursuing he will demonstrate its absurdity by dropping it just where it ought to be of service to him—in his colloquial voice. That remains as undignified and as unmelodious as ever, and yet that colloquial voice, as we propose to show hereafter, is the speaker's main dependence. Furthermore, the dignity of the recitation sounds as artificial as the want of it in conversation is natural.

The preacher may succeed in manufacturing a voice of some merit while imitating the elocutionist who drills him into, or drills into him, the voice of the ideal Hamlet. But when the preacher ceases to appear in his "part" and reappears in his pulpit, he reappears in his

**The Physiology of the Voice of no Use to those who would Learn how to Use it.**

own voice, which may sound more like the vulgar falsetto of the grave-diggers than the well-bred baritone of the Prince of Denmark.

Nor does the public speaker need lessons in bronchial anatomy in order to learn how to create a good speaking voice. The anatomical illustrations in the books on elocution are of

no more consequence than their triangles alive with tadpoles, or their pictorial examples in the awful art of gesticulation. A chart of the windpipe is of no more value to the public speaker than a picture of a bagpipe is to the opera-singer.

The Public Speaker has no use for the physiology of the voice. It is quite immaterial to him whether his voice is produced by the larynx or the calf of the leg. It is not of the slightest assistance to him to be informed that "nasality is produced by the lowering of the velum on one side and the lifting up of the base of the tongue on the other." He will get rid of his nasality, not by talking about it, but by talking without it. The only way to avoid it is—to avoid it. No drunkard was ever reformed by a diagnosis of delirium tremens. If there is no will of his own to appeal to, no appeal will be of any avail. You may make him weep, but you cannot make him act. You cannot reach a bad habit unless you set the will against it. A bad voice is a bad habit, to be got rid of just as any other bad habit is to be got rid of, by turning the will upon it; a good voice is a good habit to be acquired, just as any other good habit is to be acquired, by setting the will to acquire it. If your voice has a tendency to go up, you are to do with it just as you should do with your elbow if it has a tendency to go up at the table—put it down and keep it down by an exercise of the will. Will it down, and put it down, and keep it down until it stays down without a conscious exercise of the will.

You cannot acquire an adequate and enduring speaking voice by acquiring an adequate and occasional singing voice.

**The Singing  
Voice will not  
answer.**

The speaker's voice is a perpetual voice for perpetual use—the singer's and the elocutionist's is an occasional

voice for occasional exhibition. The elocutionist's voice is the voice of the elocutionist, the singer's that of the singer, the speaker's that of the man. So that no more dependence can be placed on lessons in singing than on lessons in imitative elocution, or dramatic recitation, for creating a competent speaking voice, since the speaker must have a voice of his own, and that he cannot have unless he has a will of his own.

Here again how different the two voices—the voice of the preacher when he “leads the singing” and the voice of the same preacher when he reads the hymn, or declaims his sermon, or reads his “notices”! A good singing voice is not a good speaking voice. They are entirely different voices.

But, while we are careful to observe just where these two arts (singing and speaking) part company, let us be equally careful to observe how far and in what respects they travel together. Where there's a will there's a way in both arts, and in all arts.

As the singer's new depths of voice gradually come into his possession, so that he finally uses them without much of an effort of the will, so the new reaches of voice acquired by the speaker as the reward of many dogged exertions of the will come at last as unconsciously as breathing. The singer sings in his acquired voice only when he sings, which is once in a while; the speaker speaks in his acquired voice whenever he speaks, which is whenever he speaks in public or private, which is about all the time.

But one lesson we may learn from these kindred but differently acquired arts—they are made to turn upon the acquisition of a suitable voice. Singers and actors, or, rather, their trainers, make everything of the voice. They put their pupils through a laborious and protracted

discipline in order to exorcise a bad voice and substitute a good one, or to build up an incompetent voice into one of adequacy and efficiency. But alas ! what singers value we resign. What can be attained in every other art only by wearisome and exacting discipline may be attained in public speaking, we are told, by “ forgetting yourself and thinking only of your subject ! ”

The pupil in vocal music “ practises ” occasionally, the pupil in public speaking must “ practise ” incessantly ; that is, he is to speak in the coveted tones whenever he speaks, whether in public or in private. And as, on the one hand, the pupil in singing may talk in whatever voice he chooses so long as he sticks to his “ part ” while singing, so, on the other hand, the pupil in speaking will find that however much or well he may sing in a bari-tone, he will still talk in the key of the cockatoo.

Speak in the  
Tones which  
you wish to  
Acquire.

You are invariably, not occasionally, but invariably to use the strongest tone you can create. Joke in it and converse in it and shout in it and whisper in it. Yes, and think in it. You can think in it (after you know how) as easily as you can speak in it. Great actors know how. They go over their “ part ” with vehement reflection. The late Mrs. Siddons spent hours of silent meditation upon hers. It is not an occasional exercise I am talking about, like the “ lessons in elocution ” with which the quacks lie in wait at the pockets of preachers, who ought to know from experience that the root of the matter is in the intellect, the reason, the understanding, the reflective faculties, the perceptive faculties, and all the rest of the faculties.

We Americans must remember that our climate is against us in this, as well as in some other departments of character development. It thins the voice as well as

the cheeks, and attenuates our tones as well as our physique. The French books on the voice call our nasality an infirmity, and classify it with lisping and stammering. They say it is congenital, and is sometimes produced by an injury to the brain or a defect in the organs of speech. Their nasality is the real one. They really do sing through their noses. Our nasal passage is closed while we produce the misnamed nasal sounds. This can easily be proved by holding your nose while you speak. However, this so-called American nasality was common enough in England before there were any United States Americans. Macaulay speaks of, and covertly explains while he speaks of "the nasal psalmody of the Puritans." It was an hereditary head-note with something besides the climate in its origin, and is now in use among those who are unconscious of both its use and its history. It comes under the head of "reversion," and the sooner it is dispensed with the better for both the cause of sincerity and the art of public speaking.

But whatever be its name, or nature, or origin, or cause, this offensive tone and every other offensive tone can only be effectively and permanently removed by willing its removal. It is sufficient for the elocutionist and actor and singer to get rid of it occasionally, and even then only by a use of the will ; but the public speaker must rid himself of it perpetually, since it is perpetually that his art calls for its removal.

This new voice is a new language, and should be desired and acquired as such. It necessitates pains and thought and consecration and continuity like that bestowed upon the acquisition of any other foreign language, and, like every other foreign language, you will never learn to con-

Acquiring a  
New Voice is  
like Acquiring  
a New  
Language.



verse in it or speak in public in it unless you talk in it incessantly.

In spite of your utmost exertions it will slip away from you often before you get hold of it permanently. You will forget and forget and forget this lesson in self-discipline and self-drill, and knowing what you and your voice are about, and find yourself saying, "How are you?" or, "What a hot summer we are having!" or, "Let us sing the forty-fifth hymn," or, "May it please the Court, Gentlemen of the Jury," in the old natural falsetto which came to you through negligence, instead of the new and equally natural baritone which comes to you by the use of the will and knowing what you and your voice are about.

The value of a vigorous, flexible, mellow baritone for public speaking cannot be overestimated. It is a richly paying investment. It covers a multitude of minor sins. It compensates somewhat for deficiencies in rhetoric and thought. There is health in it, and dignity and manliness and character.

This method of cultivating the voice leads to the cultivation of an ear for it. Without such an ear for his voice, the speaker will know no more about the deficiencies of his voice than any other deaf person knows about the deficiencies of his. Command over the voice is impossible without familiarity with it. The deaf mute is mute from ignorance of his vocal organs. He does not know that he has the organs of speech, much less the power to exercise them. It is only recently that an attempt has been made to remove this ignorance and awaken this sense of power—or, in other words, to get at and get hold of and induce the mute to lay hold of his will. Much of the prevailing indistinctness is owing to

**Cultivate an  
Ear for your  
own Voice.**

a similar ignorance. The speaker has never made the acquaintance of his own voice. Like the deaf person, he does not know where it is going, or where it is failing to go, what it is doing, or what it is failing to do.

He is so "earnest" and "pious" and so "absorbed in his subject" that his subject is absorbed by his windpipe. He cannot hear himself as others hear him. The first time, however, that a really earnest speaker, especially if he is a preacher, and one who is rationally absorbed in his subject, hears his own voice, he will be open to conviction on the subject of its deficiencies and inefficiencies.

The speaker can have command over his voice only by familiarity with it—with its capacity and incapacity, its successes and its failures. His first attempt to listen to it will convince him of his ignorance of it. One of the primary elements of the elocutionary instinct is a good ear for your own voice. And this ear for his own voice is indispensable to the speaker, and is susceptible of a high degree of cultivation. Contrariwise the neglect of this ear, especially in early life, is disastrous in the extreme.

We are to remember that the tones of the voice are somewhat the result of temperament. Those of Sir Charles Manners were. The "order" that he compelled in the House of Commons was in the voice that called for it. Now the temperament may be controlled, changed even by an exercise of the will. The history of religious sects prove that. It ought to be very much less of an undertaking to regulate and modulate the voice than to reconstruct the entire constitution, mental, moral, and physical, as has been done by the followers of George Fox and John Knox.

## II.

### ARTICULATION TO BE ACQUIRED BY AN EXERCISE OF THE WILL.

ARTICULATION deserves a chapter of its own, as it certainly deserves a treatment of its own at the hands, or, rather, mouth, of any man or woman who seeks a living or renown by means of the most perplexing and elusive of the arts—the art of public speaking.

It is impossible to overstate the importance of a good, trustworthy, uniform articulation to the public speaker. He can have no more useful form of ability than audibility. Distinctness is vital, indistinctness is fatal. And the defect of indistinctness is as common as it is radical. It is more complained of than any other defect known to the audience-room except the audience-room itself, of which we shall speak emphatically hereafter.

#### The Vice of Indistinctness.

Illustrations and examples of the prevailing vice of indistinctness in public speaking are abundant. A few will answer our purpose. This one is taken from *The Times* (London):

*To the Editor of the Times :*

SIR: In reference to Mr. G. H. Moore's letter in your journal of this day, I beg to state that, though Mr. Moore began his speech in a deliberate and audible manner, he afterward broke into a rapid style of utterance, and many of his words were spoken in so low a

tone that they could not be perfectly heard by any one at a distance. Mr. Moore must know that he did not make himself always understood, for an hon. member sitting near him asked at one part of his speech what it was that he said, and thereupon Mr. Moore repeated the words.

March 10.

YOUR REPORTER.

Another hon. member hopes the editor "will allow him to make two corrections in the report of his speech—a much better report than my rapidity of utterance (a defect which I will endeavor to correct) would entitle me to obtain." Other M.P.'s are not so tractable under this criticism. I have known an old lord to be highly nettled, indeed, to think that anybody should presume to question his audibility. Whenever Count Beust rose to speak in the Austrian Parliament, members who wished to hear him were obliged to collect around him, and we are told that "the scene represented more a private conference than the public discussions of a Parliament."

I will undertake to say that of the thousands of preachers, lawyers, and lecturers who have this slovenly precipitancy, not a baker's-dozen would, in the first place, join this Member of Parliament in admitting it. How, then, can they, in the second place, "endeavor to

Indistinctness  
is a Physical  
Defect and  
Distinctness  
a Physical  
Attainment.

correct it"? How is the habit of indistinctness to be cured, unless you know what your voice is about?

Indistinctness is a physical defect, and distinctness is a physical attainment, and the one is to be removed and the other acquired, not by "forgetting yourself and thinking only of your subject," but by remembering yourself and

thinking of your object, by an exercise of the will, by turning an ear upon your own voice, by knowing what you and your larynx are about. Indistinctness is as natural, too, as it is common and injurious. It is a part of that natural elocution which comes to us when we get upon our legs before an audience. It is as natural for some of us (your humble servant, for example) to be inarticulate, indistinct, precipitate, as it is for some others of us to be free from this defect—Gladstone, for example, and John Bright, and Spurgeon, and Dr. Liddon, and Wendell Phillips, and Charles Sumner, and Henry Clay, and the late Mrs. Siddons, and Edwin Forrest, and Charlotte Cushman. These all were endowed by nature with a physical apparatus wonderfully well adapted for articulation or enunciation.

Chatham was noted for his distinct articulation, which was a physical attainment cultivated with assiduous pains. His whisper penetrated everywhere, and his full voice was overwhelming. “The sound rose like the swell of the organ of a great cathedral, and shook the house with its peal.” But whatever he was, he was always distinct, articulate.

**Noteworthy  
Examples.**

The late Mr. Grote, the historian, was entirely indebted to his distinctness for the hearing he received. That one excellence made acceptable subject matter which would otherwise have failed to arrest attention. That one excellence he maintained by the use of his will, by resolution, by knowing what he was about, by making the most of himself, however little there was of himself. The less there is of yourself the more need for you to make the most of what there is of you.

Plunkett overcame his stutter by turning his will upon it, not by forgetting himself and thinking only of his subject, but by recollecting himself and thinking seri-

ously of his impediment. He could not speak rapidly without stuttering; and this compulsory self-restraint made him deliberate and distinct where many another speaker, who had no such impediment, for want of knowing what he was about would be a failure through indistinctness.

The catarrhal tone of the American is heard farther and more easily than the asthmatic tone of the Englishman, because it is more penetrating. Articulation comes easier to the "Connecticut treble" than to the German guttural. Women excel men in articulation for the same reason: they have a thinner voice and a longer cadence. Hence indistinctness is less excusable in the ladies and the Americans than it is in the British Islander. One of the most accomplished articulators of our age was a woman—Charlotte Cushman.

Charlotte Cushman tells us that "many young candidates for the stage say to her: 'We are finished in elocution, what next shall we do?' 'Elocution?' I reply, 'I don't know what it is. I never studied elocution! God gave me a mouth of peculiar conformation, which enables me without an effort to make a whisper heard to the remotest corner of a large auditorium.'"

**Charlotte Cushman's Articulation.** "I can testify to the truth of this; but I should like to see Miss Cushman try her mouth on the large auditorium of an oblong, level-floored, high-ceiling church. My word for it, she would be caught up by a whirlwind of whispers that would whirl memory from its seat in her distracted brain.

Miss Cushman continues: "He gave me a demonstrative soul, and a power to express it. Whatever I feel, I speak just as I feel it, with the passion, the utterance which nature dictates. That is all I know about elocution."



God gave Charlotte Cushman a mouth large enough and a soul demonstrative enough for a large auditorium, but how about those of us who have the demonstrative soul without the adequate mouth? They must make up the deficiency by creating the mouth essential for their purpose. If the speaker is not endowed by God or his ancestors with the "peculiar conformation which enables him without an effort to make himself heard," he must endow himself with it. If God did not give him an adequate mouth, he must make the most of his inadequate one; in other words, he must make his mouth adequate or close it and quit, for his demonstrative soul alone will not save him or be saved itself.

Neither Demosthenes nor Edmund Kean were endowed from on high with Miss Cushman's or Henry Clay's large oratorical mouth or peculiar conformation; but they were both abundant in "demonstrative soul and the power to express it." And it was not by simply being in earnest and absorbed in their subject; it was only by an effort of the will, conscious, energetic, and persistent, that they were enabled to make themselves distinctly heard. Curran was quite right when he declared that his shrill and fractious voice was "in a state of nature," and he was quite right in resolving to bring it out of a state of nature into a state of efficiency, which he did by bringing his will to bear upon it.

The M.P. from whom I have quoted confesses to his "rapidity of utterance," and calls it "a defect which he will endeavor to correct." God did not give him, or me, a mouth that obviates the necessity of this "correction." And while we have "studied elocution" and do know what it is, and know it is utterly inadequate and frivolous as far as public speaking is concerned, we do also know that Demosthenes, and some of the rest of us,

have had to go through considerable discipline, and study, and "effort," and exercise of the will, in order to make even a tolerably strong tone "heard to the remotest corner of a large auditorium." This disposes of two extreme and extremely fallacious opinions, the one that nothing can be done to remedy this defect, and the other that what is to be done is to "study elocution." Something had to be done in the case of Demosthenes and myself, although nothing need be done in the case of Miss Cushman. Her will is relieved of this duty, and may apply itself to others; your will must apply itself to the remedy of this disease, the removal of this impediment; for that is what it is—an impediment in speech.

The student in public speaking cannot begin too soon after his voice is what is called "formed" to look after it with his will, and keep an anxious and alert ear upon it. Like every other habit, that of indistinctness or slovenliness of delivery will grow with the growth and strengthen with the strength. A case in point occurs to me. It will serve as an illustration and an admonition. It is that of a preacher who had this habit of indistinctness while a student, but would give no heed to criticism. He considered such matters beneath one so much "in earnest" and so pious. He resented all interference by the critics of the debating society in college, and we need not be surprised to learn that he is now morbidly sensitive to the criticisms of his articulation, or, rather, his want of it. Now, this wretched mortal comes up to the severest requirements of the ordaining clergy. He is "in earnest." He is pious. He prays. He preaches "the Gospel." He "throws his whole heart and soul into his work." He "forgets himself and thinks only of his subject."

An Illustration  
and an  
Admonition.

He has a "demonstrative soul" and power enough, but not mouth enough, to express it. He is a graduate of the recitation system of education and an educated man in spite of it. He uses good rhetoric, and writes a good sermon, and it has been long enough since he was weaned by the theological seminary for him to dispense the sincere milk of the Word without depending exclusively upon his volume of theological lectures for it. He had the critical fine-tooth comb passed through his "class sermons." Nay more, in all probability, as in several such cases, he has been the victim of misplaced elocutionary confidence, and has taken expensive lessons in cheap dramatics, and can "render" certain passages of Shakespeare with almost as much imitative skill as his coacher. And yet this elaborately and expensively equipped preacher is afflicted with, and afflicts his hearers with one of the most defective and therefore ineffective styles of elocution known to public speaking. His elocutionary instinct and judgment and taste are all at their lowest point of development. They could hardly be lower. His ear is a stranger to his own voice. His will is useless to him. It is torpid. He "rows wild," which proves that he had the wrong coacher. So there he is, in spite of all his "heart" and "soul" and "earnestness," his lessons in "sacred (!) rhetoric" and imitative emphasis and gesticulatory gymnastics; there he is, tripped, balked, and thrown perpetually by a defect but for which he would have been one hundred times as effective a preacher as he is. Is the defect worth getting rid of? Is its removal worth an effort? And if he will not or cannot correct it, should not younger and more rational, even if less "earnest" men be forewarned of it and forearmed against it? Can this be done by the study of hermeneutics any more than by

the study of mathematics ? by praying for Whitefield's earnestness any more than by praying for Miss Cushman's mouth ?

So far from earnestness being a guarantee of distinctness, it is often a cause of indistinctness. In fact, there is no more appropriate name for this well-  
**Inarticulate**  
**Earnestness.**      high universal disease of public speakers than inarticulate earnestness. My newspaper says in its Congressional report : " Mr. Herbert, of Alabama, opened the discussion to-day with a speech in opposition to the report. Like most of Mr. Herbert's speeches which appear in the *Record*, the effort of the Alabama member was made in unhappy, explosive, and over-emphatic oratorical style, which gave his delivery the effect of indistinctness"—the effect of earnestness and indistinctness.

Those who are most in earnest, or most intense, or most absorbed in their subject, are oftentimes the most inarticulate, indistinct, precipitate, slovenly in enunciation. In proportion to their eagerness to be heard is their inability to make themselves heard. In proportion to the importance they attach to what they say is the difficulty of hearing what they say. This ludicrous pantomime is acted in thousands of pulpits every Sunday. The awfully earnest preacher will even burst into tears in the process of uttering the inarticulate sentiment which has affected him so deeply. If you would make your hearer cry, you must cry yourself, certainly ; but if you would let your hearer know what you are crying about, you must—tell him ! With a purely lachrymosal religion, the former is sufficient ; but if you wish to inculcate a religion that will compel a man to not only weep over his sins in his pew, but abandon them at the counter, the latter is the better method. The speaker's

emotions should be as intelligible as his thoughts, and will be if he is not so deeply "absorbed in his subject" as to secrete it by an overworked lachrymal gland.

Another function of the will in public speaking is to compel the lips to form the words and the throat to make the tones. This is indispensable to a good articulation. No words formed by the throat can be articulate. The attempt to form both the tones and the words by the throat is a habit of inarticulate earnestness. It is so "absorbed in its subject," and so intent upon "being natural," that it takes no account of this fundamental law of nature. To obey it will require an exercise of the will to which the "earnest" speaker has hitherto been a stranger. This so far from being the child's play of lessons in dramatic elocution is a man's work in self-discipline and self-culture.

**Compel the  
Lips to Form  
the Words and  
the Throat to  
Create the  
Tones.**

So here is your method of curing the wretched mortal whom we are diagnosing. Disease—indistinctness, precipitancy, slurring, slovenliness, failing to be distinctly heard whether he read a notice or a sermon, everybody whispering, "What did he say?"—in a word, inarticulate earnestness. Remedy—lessons in elocutionary emphatics and theatrics, diagrams of the diaphragm and the windpipe, and illustrations of "the rising and falling inflections," and the "rendering" of "princes, potentates, and warriors." Learn how to speak one such piece with deliberation and distinctness, and you will learn how to deliver distinctly and deliberately a Fourth-of-July oration, or a sermon on repentance, or an address to a jury!

**Elocution is a  
Quack Remedy  
for a Fatal  
Disorder.**

There are preachers, scores of them, who give five dollars a lesson for such twaddle as this, and is there one

that will give one cent, or even thank you, for telling him that his most serious obstacle is indistinctness, precipitancy, and the like, and that it is a physical obstacle, and only to be cured by consciousness of it, by turning the will upon it, by knowing what he is about, he and his epiglottis, he and his words and tones, thoughts and metaphors.

Will he heed if he is told that he can only get this obstacle out of the way by willing it away, by turning his ear upon his voice, by watchfulness, by carefulness and drill and discipline that shall take hold strong enough, and hold on long enough to root out, and kick out, and keep out forever and ever this pernicious habit of inarticulate earnestness? No, he will not heed, because there is no romance about this remedy, it is too doggedly matter-of-fact. There is no gratification of a silly boyish vanity which delights, as all little boys and big boys do, in learning how to declaim, and emphasize, and strike attitudes, and make gestures, and all that sort of thing. Above all, it does not cost money, it costs only self-conquest, which I think Solomon would join me in saying is greater than the conquest of the reading of "Boots at the Holly-Tree Inn."



### III.

#### PHYSICAL EARNESTNESS.

WITH an adequate use of his will, an adequate knowing what he is about, the speaker will make a right use of his physical organization—will be physically, as well as morally or spiritually, in earnest. If he makes no use of his will, forgets it and “thinks only of his subject,” or of the laws of emphasis taught by the elocution books, he will make no use, or he will make a misuse of his physical organization. If the will be dormant, the physical organization will be no assistance to him, will be a hindrance to him the rather. An inert physical organization is, indeed, conclusive evidence of a torpid will. Can there be a more conclusive proof that the understanding of the speaker comes miserably short of its duty than the fact that it takes no account of physical earnestness, or the working of the body to the advantage of the mind, or the creating of a voice for the service of the intellect?

We are always to bear in mind that an impression is produced by the speaker quite apart from and often in spite of the words he utters. It is a mesmeric influence, it is feeling, reflection, thought produced by the animal galvanic battery on two legs. An influence goes out of the speaker into the hearer. Something went out of Bonaparte into his soldiers; so his soldiers said. Doubtless the great warrior was a great

An Animal  
Galvanic  
Battery on  
Two Legs.

animal galvanic battery on two legs, or six legs, counting the horse's.

I have no doubt Shiel found it greatly to the advantage of his animal galvanic battery on two legs to leap to his legs as he did, and rush to the clerk's table and pound it. Or, perhaps, he did it to cover his confusion or overcome his stage-fright, which is the curse of many a speaker who is criticised for presumption and conceit. Mr. Gladstone has something of the same habit. He springs to the box with greyhound agility, reminding one of a greyhound in the leash, and claps the box with the palm of his hand. Disraeli once brought down the house by congratulating himself that the clerk's table formed an insurmountable barrier between him and the Right Hon. gentleman.

Sir Robert Peel struck the box on the table, we are told, about twice a minute, and "as the box was remarkable for its acoustic properties, the sound was distinctly heard in every part of the House, and considerably aided the effect of his speech." Then he could "look as solemn as though he were commissioned to stand up and proclaim that the world has come to an end."

Never allow yourself to go physically to sleep if you expect to keep yourself mentally awake.

There is fallacy and mischief in tracing all the shortcomings of the preacher to his deficiency in moral or spiritual earnestness, in always nagging the candidate at his ordination with having no more conscience than Red Cloud attributes to his friend the enemy who is so destitute of lands and mines that the Black Hills must be ours, forcibly if we can, peaceably if we must. The "charge to the candidate," as well as the ordination sermon, seems to take for granted what the

**Moral Earnest-**  
**ness which is**  
**common**  
**enough is**  
**not enough.**

agricultural brethren say they do take for granted, that the young parson leaves his piety behind him when he emerges from the recitation-room. Hence, say they, his lack of "earnestness." They mean energy, snap, animal galvanism, and all that species of qualification which is implied in the "call." They mean that he has ceased to be, if he ever was, an animal galvanic battery on two legs, and unless he is that he is all vanity and a striving after wind. The "charge to the candidate" sounds more like the apprehensive counsels of an old missionary to his "native preachers" than what we would naturally expect to hear a Christian son of ten generations of Christians use to another Christian son of ten generations of Christians.

Both the agricultural and the ordaining brethren are confounding moral with physical earnestness. No, the defect of the young neophyte is not moral or spiritual, it is physical; though it would be fair enough to say that the defect on the part of his theological trainers is moral, very moral and very grave. They have loaded him with tools and have not taught him the use of them. They have put so much learning into his head that he was obliged to take out his brains to make room for it. They have never once suggested to him that he has any will, or galvanic battery, or physical apparatus for rightly dividing the bread of life, or that he had better make the acquaintance of his own voice, and find out what he and his epiglottis are about when he gets upon his legs before an audience. He knows his lessons in "Sacred Rhetoric," though he could not tell for the life of him why it is "sacred," and has passed his examination in Syriac—what more does he want? And what more can the ordaining clergy and the rural laity demand?

He is not defective in the moral qualities which are

brought to his attention with such lugubrious solicitude. As a general rule, he is not fatally deficient in intellectual qualifications—or if he is, why is he allowed to graduate? Here is where all this moral solicitude might come in to advantage. No. The wretched mortal will, as a rule, do as well as he knows. His difficulty is in his ignorance of what he should know, for which he, instead of his instructors, is visited with the apprehensions and reprehensions of his agricultural brethren. He has been (professedly) in training for a life of public speaking, for the art of winning souls, the art of fishing for men by means of public appeal; and he knows no more about how to use these means than a physician would know about how to use his remedies if he had never seen them or heard of them. What else can you expect of the wretched mortal, after he has been so long and painstakingly taught that he only had to let himself alone, in order to graduate an effective preacher; that he must forget himself, and think only of his subject; that all he had to do was to do nothing?

**The Physical**      Another way of putting this panacea  
                   **not the**            for the wretched preacher's defect or  
**Spiritual Heart** failure is to "charge" him with "want  
                   **Needs a**            of heart." If he will only "throw his  
                   **"Change."**        whole heart" into his sermons he will  
 make a successful preacher. If that be true every unsuccessful preacher has failed for want of sincerity, or common honesty, and every successful preacher has succeeded because he was so much superior to his fellows in honesty and sincerity; for the heart meant here is the moral nature. The statement is its own refutation. What the unsuccessful preacher needs is not more heart in the spiritual, but more heart in the physical sense. He does throw his whole soul, but not

his whole body, into his work. He does not make the most of himself.

An English newspaper, complaining of the preachers of the Church of England, says: "Take a Methodist preacher who has something to say and says it with all his heart, set him down in village or city, and he will in a short time fill the commonest and baldest barn. Let a Church of England minister display the same enthusiasm, and he will have as much success."

The Methodist preacher "says it with all his" body, and if the Church of England preacher should "display the same enthusiasm," it would be a physical enthusiasm, which is just the kind of "enthusiasm," *alias* "earnestness," which the latter is deficient in, and which twenty-seven thousand four hundred and fifty-two other preachers are deficient in. They do not say it with all their physical heart. The preachers instanced here as examples of "heart" are examples of what self-rousing, self-incitement, physical animation, knowing what you are about, however comes that knowledge, will do toward firing the "heart" and soul and mind and all that side of a man's nature. The difference between two such, or any two preachers, might turn upon "saying it" or not "saying it with the whole" voice, which is a physical qualification. It is said that such people as the pioneer preachers address can be moved only by preachers who "throw their whole souls into their work"—who throw their whole bodies into their work is what you mean; else their "whole souls" must be very much superior to the "whole souls" of their better educated brethren. It is not necessary to join in the apprehensions of the ordaining or the agricultural brethren, and accuse those better educated preachers of having "no soul" or "heart" in their work. They

have as much spiritual or moral heart in their work as their unclassically educated brethren, but they have less physical heart in it. They are all soul and no body. In educating their minds they have paralyzed their hearts. They have gained the whole world and lost their bodies.

A good preacher once asked me what I thought he needed most to make his speaking more effective. "Put one thing into your style," I said, "and I'll let you off." "What is that?" "Vivacity." He had an excellent bass voice and unexceptional manners, but he was monotonously oratund, and getting more and more so. Vivacity would improve his oratory and prolong his pastorate. He could secure it, not by forgetting himself and thinking only of his subject—that he had done for twenty years—or by five-dollar lessons in imitative elocution—those he had tried to his cost—he could secure vivacity by willing it into his style.

The way to be vivacious is to be vivacious.

**Educating all  
the Earth out  
of the Earthern  
Vessel.**

The education is all done upon one side of the man—the inside, the intellectual side—and it fails from not getting in something in the way of "earnest" education on the physical side—the outside—which it is the fashion to look upon as the lower side. But it is the side toward the fish, and important somewhat, therefore, if the man is to be a fisher of men. It is the side of the emotional nature, which is five eighths of a speaker's, especially a preacher's, success. It is the side of common sense, of practical judgment, of mesmeric power, of vivacity, of unction, of adequate voice, of knowing what you are about. How could the June roses get through their education without their lower side? So with great oaks and great preachers, by their roots we shall know them. Nature is more inexorable and more impatient with her



cabbage heads than her human heads. The former would die before entering upon their education, if they were not well-rooted and grounded at the lower side of their nature ; the latter live in a kind of trance long after the root of the matter has gone out of them, and left them all top. And even there vegetation dies, for there are no more hairs on their heads than there are honeysuckles on Mont Blanc. An educated minister of the Gospel is the only rush that can grow without mire. We must remember, however, that Nature never leaves her vegetable children to themselves, and does wean her intellectual children, who are expected to know what they are about or perish from lack of that knowledge. Pull up the blade that has just formed, and you will never have the ear, much less the full corn in the ear ; but a preacher can preach on and on, with no more juice, or sap, or nutriment, or animal life, or even vegetable life in him than there is in last year's bird's-nest. If he has his treasure in an earthen vessel, he has taken great pains to take out the earth before he put in the treasure. Is that the reason why his flock answer their prayer for a revival by sending for a " revivalist," and bring on the " outpouring" by pouring out to hear him ? Is the revivalist's " earnestness" of a superior quality, or only of another kind ?

All this mesmeric power of which we read so much and hear so much, now turning up in the shape of a miraculous gift from heaven in the hands (the hands, literally) of a mesmeric doctor, and now in the familiar ambiguity of our ancient friends, Biology and Psychology—all this, whatever it is, works out from the physical side of our nature. And whatever may be our superstitious notions, or scientific solutions of it, there

Animal  
Galvanism  
Educated  
Away.

it is, the most powerful constituent element of public speaking, or oratory, or fishing for men, or winning souls, and all the way down from that to carrying an election for village constable. And it is this supreme element of power in the art of public speaking of which you gradually and effectually deprive your student who is to depend upon public speaking for a livelihood.

Is it any wonder that the agricultural congregations shake their heads with distrust at your Mill for Grinding out Preachers, and begrudge the money they are solicited to contribute to it? They know that they do not breed all the "go" out of their thoroughbred horse. The education of horses increases both their speed and their brawn. Educated dogs are much more "in earnest," and much more intelligently in earnest, than their uneducated fellows. Culture promotes their mettle and masculinity. They do not decrease in avoirdupois, or any other kind of poise, as they increase in intellect. They can graduate from their training-master without the dyspepsia or the periodical dumps, because their physical earnestness is made to keep pace with their intellectual earnestness. How much prouder and grander is the voice of the high-bred mastiff than that of the ill-bred mongrel? In the case of the intellectual animal who is educated for preaching, the intellectual is promoted, not only without regard to the physical, but at the expense of it.

A "drawing out," indeed, it is, this cramming, ramming system of education by recitation. It draws like the lancet that taps a vein. It bleeds the preacher, and leaves him so genteel and jejune that no hearer ever gets a particle of invigoration or inoculation from him. His animal magnetism is refined away. If you should pick up a young fellow with a genius for public speaking in

him, with a great show of rude force, with little home culture but much animal magnetism, with a large faculty for affecting and infecting an audience, with splendid physical earnestness—I say, if you should stumble upon such a young fellow as this, and put him through your Mill for Grinding out Preachers, he would drop out of its hopper with all his heart and virility ground out of him. He can dress better, perhaps, and he certainly is better educated than he was when he set out ; but can he speak better, can he speak as well, as effectively, with as manly a voice, with as much mesmeric power ? No, he cannot ; and this is the fact which the ordaining clergy and the agricultural laity are blindly bemoaning. No, it is not earnestness, in the ordinary sense, that the man needs. He is probably more in earnest in that sense than he ever was—more intellectually, morally, spiritually in earnest. It is physical earnestness that he needs. You have gorged the brain, and tapped the vein. You have gone into sanguinary alliance with the climate, and left nothing but whiteness and emaciation where there was once red blood and glorious flesh. Education as a process of emasculation ! So when the young preacher goes back to his friends, they throw up their hands in consternation and exclaim, “What in God’s name have they been doing to him ?” For it is in God’s name that you have done it, you know ! What has become of the fellow’s magnificent physical earnestness, with which he used to sweep down upon his hearers, and bear them away ? It has been exchanged for education, instead of being the basis of it, the veins and arteries of it. If the battery which worked so powerfully before ceased to work after the education, have we not reason to charge the calamity upon the education ?

Some students, however, survive this system of educa-

tion by enervation and come out of the Mill with some of the brawn which they had when they went into it. Those who make the worst show in recitation lose the least brawn in the course of it, and make the best speakers after they are done with it. Those public speakers who are none the worse for their education are the ones most likely to excel. The Rev. John Angell James was none the worse for his, and because he did not take to recitation he was given over for a dunce.

“When he completed his education” (recitation?), his biographer tells us, “he was remarkable for nothing but impetuosity, breadth of chest, and such strongly developed pugilistic tendencies as to warrant this blunt summary of his character: the thick-headed fool was fit for nothing but fighting.” But he was fit for preaching as well as fighting, and his physical accessories were as valuable to him in the pulpit as they would have been in the wrestler’s ring.

John Bright is of the same build and temper. He reminds you of a great rock breasting the storm, while a great storm rages in his breast.

Chancellor Thurlow was probably one of the most marked of that class of speakers who make up in physical earnestness what they lack in intellectual force. He is said to have “rushed like Achilles into the field, and dealt destruction around him more by the strength of his arm, the deep tones of his voice, and the lightning of his eye than by any peculiarity of genius.”

Are there any rules to be observed for keeping the health and preventing ills of the throat? Yes. I’ll

**A Few Ounces of Prevention.** give you a few ounces of prevention that have grown out of my own experience.

Dash cold water on the throat every morning when you wash, for three hundred and sixty-five, not

three hundred and sixty-four, mornings of the year, and wipe it off roughly with a coarse towel. There is nothing like this for strengthening the outside muscles and inside apparatus. It is three hundred and sixty-five ounces of prevention per annum.

You may wear silk around the neck, but never wool. Silk keeps off the cutting wind without creating moisture, and it can be left off without harm. Wool heats and moistens, and once accustomed to it the omission of it is dangerous. Do not allow the collar to touch the throat. There should be room for two fingers between the collar and the throat.

Keep your mouth shut when you are not using it for eating, drinking, or speaking. It is not to be used for breathing. Breathe through the nose. If you awake in the night and find your mouth open, get up and shut it. Besides, an open mouth indicates weakness of character; keeping it closed by an exercise of the will strengthens the character by strengthening the will. Lavater calls the mouth "the seat of brutality and of delicacy, of sincerity and falsehood." Do not let it betray you.

Straighten up and keep yourself straight. Walk upright. The "shoulder braces" are of no use except to suggest bracing yourself up. They will not keep your shoulders back, but they will make you keep your shoulders back. They jog the will. When you straighten up for the first time you will find that your clothes do not fit you. Your trousers are too short and your coat won't button. The tailor measured you at your greatest shrinkage. This physical discipline will suggest and promote physical self-respect, and that in turn will promote moral self-respect. The attitude of dignity dignifies the feeling. Straightening the spine

stiffens the moral vertebra. The self-distrustful speaker is helped by a confident demeanor. Try it.

The best thing to eat just before or just after speaking is a bit of half-done beefsteak and plain bread without butter, and if you care for anything to drink, one cup of good English breakfast tea. If you can drink milk with impunity substitute it for the tea at your after-speaking lunch. Eschew tobacco, and take no longer fire-water for your stomach's sake when you really intend it for your brain's sake. The occasional stimulant becomes a constant crutch. The speaker's depression that naturally follows his exaltation is only deepened and darkened by the use of narcotics or stimulants. Roast beef is the best remedy for a morbid mind. Nourishment that increases brawn, and not intoxicants that diminish it, are what the speaker needs.

Never drink water while you are speaking. It aggravates the thirst it is designed to quench. It is a nervous habit, like the handkerchief habit of the preachers.

Sleep immediately before speaking is beyond all comparison the best preparation for it. If you can snatch a cat-nap of ten minutes you will be greatly refreshed, but if you can get an hour or two of slumber on your bed in your night-gown, you will rise for your sermon, lecture, or plea with your strength renewed like that of a strong man to run a race or make a speech. A day's lay-off on the bed is the rest-cure. If the brain-workers would do at home what they go to Philadelphia in order to be compelled to do, they would save money and time, and accomplish by a short-cut what they seldom attain by these roundabout, circuitous, and overdone methods. Go to bed once in awhile and stay there for awhile—all day, two days, a week even. Why go to a penitentiary to do what you can do in your own home, sweet home?



## IV.

### THE SELF-RELIANCE FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING.

THE public speaker is dependent upon himself for the use of his will, for knowing what he is about, for making the most of himself, for the physical and mental conditions essential to his success. There is an exaltation about public speaking peculiar to itself which shows how self-reliant the speaker is. There is a heat and thrill about it to be had from no other exercise of mind or body. Its highest reaches are accompanied by a delirium which is probably the most delightful form of intoxication of which the human mind is capable. He who has once felt it will hanker after it as an old toper after his bottle. If there are public speakers who have none of this exhilaration, they may infer that they were not designed of heaven to do much upon earth. Their inability to make themselves feel accounts for their being unable to make their hearers feel, and is perhaps a reason why they should cease to feel themselves "called" of God or man to fight it out any longer on that line. There is no better exercise than the physical earnestness of public speaking. It is as good for the liver as horseback-riding. A pulpit sweat is better than a Turkish bath.

Some minds work best, most effectively, and expeditiously in and by the act of public speaking. Such men are public thinkers as distinguished from closet thinkers.

**The Individuality of Public Speaking.**

As some cannot think or express their thoughts except

in the seclusion of the study, so some are unable to think out their thoughts unless they speak them out. The two classes mix, but there are enough strongly marked men of each to make two separate and distinct classes of men who express their thoughts for the benefit of their fellow-men—speakers and writers. The most successful public speakers are supreme before an audience, but must take a secondary, if not twenty-secondary place among writers strictly so called.

Preachers who produce the greatest immediate effect (which is the primary aim of preaching), as Whitefield and Bossuet, are not competent to cope with those who make a science of thinking and of publishing their thoughts.

Such facts as these prove the individuality of public speaking, and the commanding individuality of the art of public speaking indicates how exclusive should be the devotion to it of those who wish to excel in it. And this suggests a reason why some who make considerable attainments fall short of the highest attainments in the art of rhetoric which Plato called “The art of ruling the minds of men.” They are divided in their allegiance between writing and speaking, or between ruling the minds of men by speaking and ruling them by writing. The self-reliance for public speaking promotes this exclusive enthusiasm for it. Preachers who do something besides preach, or pleaders who do something besides plead, or agitators who do something besides agitate the public mind, are not smitten with the passion for ruling the minds of men by public speaking, without which exclusive passion it is impossible for all the conditions for success in public speaking to be fulfilled.

Chatham said : “ I must sit still ; for when once I am up, everything in my mind comes out.” What brought

it out? Getting up. Sitting still kept his mind quiet; getting on his legs set his mind in motion. To say that Chatham's mind worked oratorically is to say that it worked under the incitement of excitation peculiar to the act of public speaking. Gladstone's is another mind that works oratorically, whether he express himself in a magazine article or in a speech from the Treasury Bench. Wherever or however he speaks, he always speaks in the fascinating rhythm of oratorical diction. He cannot talk at his best unless he rises to make a speech to the company, be it small or large; and when he does rise to make a speech, he talks as few other men can. He, like Chatham and Fox and Curran and O'Connell and Whitefield and Phillips and Clay, has the oratorical temperament—a temperament that takes fire by the simple act of public speaking. It needs only to be once up in order to be ignited.

**The Oratorical  
Temperament.**

Webster was endowed, like Macaulay, with an oratorical diction, but failed in the oratorical temperament. He lacked self-reliance. He depended upon the occasion, and even when that was supplied he was liable to fail. Parties do not like leaders whom they have to nurse. The stump is a rough cradle.

The late Lord Clarendon was another marked instance of failure in public speaking, from a deficiency in the self-reliance indispensable for public speaking, especially for that of public men who would create and mould public opinion. "His merits," we are told, "were half hidden, and his usefulness greatly marred by a constitutional sluggishness which, while it saved him from errors, cheated him of brilliant victories and some prizes. In his whole career, perhaps, no episode occurred at which

**Lord  
Clarendon's  
"Constitutional  
Sluggishness."**

his pulse seemed to beat faster than its wont. He had not the temperament that would have enabled him to make the most of his superior powers and splendid experience. A little more rapidity, and Lord Clarendon might have died Prime-Minister." A little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep on the pulpit-desk, and you will—be an insurance agent! His lordship came of a slow-blood family. A little more consciousness of that fact, and a little more self-reliance and self-excitation in consequence, is what he needed—a little more turning of the will upon his "constitutional sluggishness," a little more of that knowing what he was about before an audience, without which no public speaker can make the most of himself.

A war minister of England advocates a scheme of army reorganization which, he says, "cost him many months of anxious thought and study so languidly," according to the report, "that the House was hardly able to realize the importance of the changes which he proposed. He spoke within his voice, so that it was necessary to listen attentively in order to hear. A little more boldness and ring would certainly have procured for the scheme more consideration." The same anxious thought and study that produced the scheme would have procured for it the requisite boldness and ring. Speaking within the voice—that is, within its power—is the result of a flagging will. It is natural enough, because languor is as natural as anger.

Lord John Russell tells us how the "tame and ineffective manner" of Lord Althorp in bringing in the Coercion Bill produced a feeling of disgust in his followers that was well-nigh mutiny, when Stanley, afterward Lord Derby, saved the day, and the bill, and his party by a

**How Lord  
Derby Saved  
the Day.**

speech that completely neutralized the "tame and ineffective" influence of his leader.

"He detailed, with striking effect, the circumstances attending the murder of a clergyman and the agony of his widow, who, after seeing her husband murdered, had to bear in terror running knocks at the door, kept up all night by the miscreants who had committed the crime. The House became appalled and agitated at the dreadful picture which he placed before their eyes; they felt for the sorrows of the innocent; they were shocked at the dominion of assassins and robbers. When he had produced a thrilling effect by these descriptions he turned upon O'Connell, who led the opposition to the measure, and who seemed a short time before about to achieve a triumph in favor of sedition and anarchy. He recalled to the recollection of the House of Commons that at a recent public meeting O'Connell had spoken of the House of Commons as six hundred and fifty-eight scoundrels. In a tempest of scorn and indignation, he excited the anger of the men thus designated against the author of the calumny. The House, which two hours before seemed about to yield to the great agitator, was now almost ready to tear him to pieces. In the midst of the storm which his eloquence had raised he sat down, having achieved one of the greatest triumphs of eloquence ever won in a popular assembly by the powers of oratory."

The late Lord Derby had an abundance of self-induced excitement. He had the oratorical temperament and a genius for debate. I heard the last speech he ever delivered, and was impressed with the knightly bearing and the self-reliance of the great debater. I could see plainly that he was quite used to making himself come to time when the time came for the speech. He carried

himself impressively. He held a roll of paper in his right hand, which he raised high and brought down into the palm of his left hand with a whack. It was a capital device for startling the drowsy woosack or the drones in gowns.

It would not be easy to find another man in modern times more exclusively, and in consequence more effectively, a public speaker than Wendell Phillips. Indeed,

Wendell  
Phillips's  
Self-Reliance.

he was so rigidly and restrictedly a ruler of the minds of men by the art of rhetoric, that his effectiveness is confined to one branch of that one art—that of agitator.

And so pertinaciously and exclusively did his mind adhere to that department of public speaking, that he failed in even the department so nearly akin to it as controversy. To see Mr. Phillips fail in controversial public speaking, as well as in the tact and judgment indispensable for acting in conjunction with many men of many minds, was to see how narrow may be the gauge upon which the art of ruling the minds of men by public speaking may be made to run. Mr. Phillips once said of himself in a private chat: "I am a stirrer-up of things generally." That is exactly what he was, and a soother-down of things generally, or a judicious adjuster of things generally, is exactly what he was not. He was a born and trained agitator.

So was Daniel O'Connell. Trained, I say. Mr. Phillips told me that he learned how to make an audience hear and heed him by their attempt to make him hear and heed them. The more they would not listen the more he determined that they should hear what he had to say. It was a rare training in distinctness, in articulate earnestness, in the use of the will, in knowing what you are about, and in self-reliance. Mr. Phillips's



mind, not only by reason of its peculiar construction, but as the result of his experience with the mob, worked as Chatham's was said to have worked, oratorically. His mission was to create public opinion, not to utilize it. "Abrupt utterances, thrown out isolated, unexplained"—the rest must be done by others. He was no general, but a magnificent Uhlan, our bright particular star of pure oratory, and as knightly pure a soul as ever broke a lance with a popular injustice. We bring him in here as an example of what a passionate and exclusive devotion to public speaking will accomplish, and how this art—the only one used by Him who spake as never man spake—rewards her votaries. Indeed, it is written over the threshold of every art: Thou shalt have no other arts before Me.

I asked Phillips what he thought of Henry Vincent. "Pulmonary eloquence!" Vincent is unfairly treated by this fling. We are just as much in need of his dramatic descriptions as we are of Phillips's conversational invective. Vincent's day was over when he came to this country. His voice was cracked. Twenty-five years before the burly chartist was a power with his powerful elocution, and theatrical manner, and self-induced mesmerism.

Phillips on the platform was an elegant gentleman conversing with his friends and lampooning his enemies. He was a rare instance of what the colloquial element in public speaking can accomplish. But he was not appreciated by untrained audiences. He required listeners that were accustomed to listening.

Some who have not the oratorical tem- **Make the Most**  
perament have the self-reliance and will- **of Yourself.**  
power, which enables them to make the  
most of their faculties and attainments. These sluggish

temperaments, which are not roused by the simple act of public speaking, are just the ones to whom this device of self-excitation is immensely useful. The oratorical temperament is invariably associated with physical lassitude and indolence. It is essentially a Celtic as distinguished from a Teutonic temperament; a bituminous as opposed to an anthracite temperament. It can get mad or make a speech upon the slightest provocation. It has a constitutional aversion for manual labor, for all physical exertion, indeed, except that induced by passionate emotion, whether it take the form of oratorical, political, or martial ambition. Oratory thrives where agriculture declines. What we and the English boast of as extraordinary in the way of impassioned public speaking is common enough in France and Italy, where indolence and eloquence go hand in hand. The oratorical temperament is very inflammable under the excitation of public speaking. "When once it is up," its blood is up. This is not so much or so often the case with the oratory of England, but it is becoming more and more so with that of this country, where the Celtic temperament is already in the ascendant, and where the Celtic forms of thinking and style of writing and speaking are destined to prevail.

We cannot, however, share in the advantages of a national peculiarity unless we share in the peculiarity itself. If our minds do not work oratorically we must compel them to work as oratorically as we can. We must make the most of what qualifications we have, and the more we make of them the more we can make of them. If "when once we are up" nothing "in our minds comes out," we must devise some means for bringing something out, or abandon public speaking as the means by which we are "called" to win souls, or

reform nations, or stir up things generally. A drum has nothing in it until it is struck. Then it is full of sound and fury, signifying something, signifying To arms—battle—victory.

Sometimes it will happen—nay, it generally happens, except in political campaign speaking—that the occasion is dormant and the audience is dormant.

What is the speaker to do under such circumstances? Wait for the audience to come to life, in the hope that it will bring him to life? or bring himself to life, and by that means bring his audience to life?

**The Virtue of Earnestness to be Assumed if you have it not by Temperament.**

What brings the frogs to life in the spring? Certainly the frogs do not bring themselves to life. They are awakened by the increase of warmth in the rays of the sun. So the frogs in the audience will never come to life until they obtain a little more, or a good deal more, warm light from the speaker. You may know it has arrived by the croaking. Better the croaking of the few cold frogs at your superfluous warmth, than the condemnation that was visited upon the pastor of the church at Laodicea for being merely lukewarm.

When the hearers are least interested, from either their familiarity with the topic or the depression of their surroundings, the speaker is to be most interested—that is, he is to show most interest, hence animation, physical earnestness. Showing interest will increase his interest. Assuming such a virtue creates it.

When you suspect that your sermon or lecture is below your mark, and that it will therefore be received with delight by those who enjoy nothing in your discourse except its defects, that is the time for summoning all your self-reliance, your physical earnestness, your will-power. That is the time for falling back upon your

reserves in the way of faculties and qualities which always stand ready to fly to your assistance when those which constitute your vanguard are driven in. That is the time to lift up your vertebræ, and your head, and your pluck, and your voice, and look your audience square in the eye, clear your throat—in a word, when your earthen vessel is caught and cannot bear up into the wind, let her drive. Something may come of it, whereas nothing can come of doing nothing. These moments of contrary winds are very critical ones for the earthen vessel. They sometimes carry him upon the rocks through the sheer helplessness and give-up of the captain—Captain Will. Hence the necessity for a self-reliance which is abundant in resources, and quick in the use of them, and as competent for the perilous dash as the safe manœuvre. The speaker must conquer himself if he would conquer his audience and turn its apathy into interest.

It is preposterous to say that in every other occupation and profession in the world, from fox-hunting to office hunting, a man is to make the most of himself, but that in preaching a man is to see how little he can make of himself, his judgment, tact, physical earnestness, and self-reliance. All squeamishness with reference to moving himself, in order that he may move others, the preacher should put away at once and forever. There is no quarrel between the highest sense of spiritual dependence and the liveliest sense of self-reliance. Both are inconsistent with a parson's giving an ill man reason for saying : " You speak of the joys of heaven in such a way as to make me disgusted with them." To say that we must not use a tone until we have its feeling, is equivalent to saying that we must not be courteous or

**Self-Reliance  
Consistent  
with Spiritual  
Dependence.**

civil until we feel like it. It is just as much the preacher's duty to speak in the tone and manner of sympathy while he is administering sympathy, regardless of his own feelings, as it is our duty to behave courteously to our fellows whether we feel like it or not. Unless the preacher absolutely disbelieves what he says, he is justified in saying it, is required to say it as though he does believe it. No man on earth could stand the test of only preaching when his faith is at its highest. In fact, much of a preacher's scepticism is an evanescent mood which nothing puts to flight sooner than preaching. This mood, too, instead of arising from an inquiring mind, may arise from a sour stomach—or a stomach overloaded with hot bread and ice-water, which may have something to do with the low state of hunger and thirst after righteousness.

I can recall no better illustration of how the best trained and most confident of public speakers may be thrown by the occasion than the failure of the felicitous and facetious Jeffrey in his attempt to present John Philip Kemble with a gold snuff-box at a public dinner at Edinburgh.

**A Practised  
Speaker  
Thrown by the  
Occasion.**

“He rose for the purpose with full confidence in that extemporaneous power which had never failed him; but when the dramatist raised his kingly form at the same instant and confronted the diminutive man with his magnificent obeisance—the grandest, probably, ever made by mortal—the most fluent of speakers was suddenly struck dumb. He sat down, with his speech unfinished and the golden gift unrepresented.”

Sometimes the audience, utterly unsuspecting of its royal appearance, will assume a “kingly form” to even a speaker who had every reason to suppose he had con-

ceit enough to carry him through, and strike him dumb, or, what is just as bad, strike him with a complication of bewildering phrases.

The oratorical, like the poetical or musical organization, is apt to be irritable, touchy, easily thrown, and the public speaker needs equanimity and poise. In controversy it is indispensable. **Self-Possession and Good-Nature.** The debater who loses his temper loses the battle. Burke's wonderful force and brilliancy were hindered by his irritability. Lyndhurst was often more than a match for Brougham, with all his resources, by reason of his superior coolness, which was the result of self-discipline by the use of the will. Pitt kept his temper, and was kept by it. Although he sometimes vomited from nervousness behind the speaker's chair, he never lost his balance before it. Disraeli lost his temper at starting out, but saw his error, and ever after knew what he and his temper were about. He never again let go the reins. He kept himself well in hand.

This recalls the second Henry Grattan, who "could not utter a half dozen sentences without getting into such a passion and indulging in such violence of gesture that it was quite unsafe for any member to sit within reach of his right arm." He "forgot himself and thought only of his subject," did not know what he and his gestures were about.

Luther said : " I never speak so well as when I am in a passion ;" but according to his own confession his most injudicious and injurious utterances grew out of his speaking when he was in a passion.

Public speaking is depressing in proportion as it is exhilarating, and is therefore necessarily followed by a reaction. You tumble from great heights to correspond-



ingly great depths. You cannot have the blessing without the curse involved in it. Public speaking is no exception to the universal rule—we die to live ; he that saveth himself shall lose himself, and he that devoteth himself must perish of the devotion. Still, you can hold yourself together, and break the force of the law somewhat. But not by fooling away your time on lessons in emphasis, or attitudes before a looking-glass, or even by giving your whole time to recitations in the dead languages. If your teachers of law and theology do not pay any attention to your training in the living language in which you are to speak, or to your judgment, or to your physical discipline, or to your self-restraint, you must give attention to them yourself in downright, upright, outright earnest, or you will graduate a fool or a paralytic.

It was said of Daniel O'Connell that if his feelings were not enlisted, his manner was cold and his voice monotonous, and those who never heard him before "would wonder how he ever could have attained so much popularity." They expected the public speaker to be what they never expect their trotting horses and laying hens to be—always at their best. Neither horse, hen, nor speaker can endure such a test. O'Connell probably knew what he and his feelings were about, and kept them under the control of his will and judgment.

Mirabeau was very appreciative of his physical accessories. He counted much upon his hideous features, his heavy eyebrows, his enormous brush of hair, upon his very ugliness. "No one knows," he said, "all the power of my ugliness. When I shake my terrible mane none dare interrupt me." He had a frightful stare, and covered himself with the ferocity of a polar bear ; but

O'Connell,  
Mirabeau and  
Brougham.

Madame de Saillant says he was "an empty bugbear." Perhaps nobody knew that better than himself. Every bully dreads the discovery of his own cowardice. Oratory is often the refuge of the craven braggart.

Mirabeau was a good specimen of self-reliance and self-restraint as well as physical earnestness. He was slow at first, began with great deliberation, kept himself well in hand, made the most of himself, always knew what he and his savage voice were about. With all his storm and rage he never lost self-command or equilibrium. He determined that his voice should be heard in all its varied inflections and cadences, and it was. He made a dagger of it, and thrust into his hearers, or a maul of it, and brought it down upon them with mashing, crashing force.

Lord Brougham was a rare illustration of the use of the will in public speaking of self-reliance, and knowing what you are about, and making the most of yourself when you get upon your legs before an audience. He had an oratorical ambition and an oratorical temperament. He made a study of himself and of every other speaker. He picked up any quality or device that he found in the effective barristers and preachers, and incorporated it in his own style. That is the way he secured his famous "Brougham whisper." He noticed that a preacher made up for the feebleness of his voice by lowering it at certain times on certain passages. He cultivated a whisper which commanded attention, but he knew what he and his voice were about too well to be always whispering. He knew when to whisper and when to blow upon his bugle. He knew enough to be dull enough when it suited his purpose. He could rest himself, and save himself, and husband his resources for the emergency. He knew, as every speaker should,

where he was strong, and where weak, and in what kind of rhetorical harness he worked best. He was great in making or repelling an attack. He was a striking illustration of how much the combative element has to do with the working of the animal galvanic battery on two legs. His delivery expressed his mood and created it as well. When he rose the storm rose within him; when he sat down the storm subsided. He spoke as much with his body as he did with his mind. And his body, like Mirabeau's, was a powerful auxiliary of the mind. He had a bold forehead and a shaggy shock of coarse hair—a rock covered with thorns and briars. His nose was a huge crag, and his eyes glared. He was awkward, but his awkwardness became him. It was in keeping with his style of rhetoric and elocution. For such a speaker to take on the effeminate graces of a Chesterfield would be to reduce him to—a Chesterfield.

Whoever has made a study of our English books of rhetoric must have observed something of a contradiction in their advice with reference to the self-reliance for public speaking. Blair says, **Contradictions in the Books of Rhetoric.** under the head of “The Pathetic Part of a Discourse,” which might be called the moving part of a discourse: “The only effectual method (of moving others) is to be moved yourselves. . . . The internal emotion of the speaker adds a pathos to his words, his looks, his gestures, and his whole manner, which exerts a power almost irresistible over those who hear. But”—you must not be moved yourselves by yourselves. You must not be in the slightest degree self-reliant for your internal emotions—“But on this point, as I have had occasion before to show, all attempts toward becoming pathetic, when we are not

moved ourselves, expose us to certain ridicule." Our author then refers with approval to Quintilian's description of the method he pursued for moving others—*i.e.*, by first moving himself ! " Quintilian, who discourses upon this subject with much good sense," declares that his " method for entering into those passions which he wanted to excite in others," was to " set before his own imagination strong pictures of the distress or indignities which they had suffered whose cause he was to plead." He " dwelt upon these till he was affected by a passion similar to that which the persons themselves had felt. To this method he attributes all the success he ever had in public speaking, and (Blair adds) there can be no doubt that whatever tends to increase an orator's sensibility will add greatly to his pathetic powers." If Quintilian's imaginary " pictures" were not " attempts toward becoming pathetic," or being moved " when he was not moved himself," a method which Blair declares would incur ridicule, there must be some way of reconciling the positions of these two authors which I cannot discover. Blair reflected a popular fallacy upon this subject which was unknown to the ancients—*viz.*, that because the actor is self-reliant for his emotional resources, the public speaker, especially the preacher, should not be. But when he, or any other English writer, descants upon the expression of the emotions or passions in language, he finds himself trying to balance himself on the two stools, that of exclusive dependence upon the occasion, and that of self-reliance when the occasion fails. Quintilian and Cicero had no such prejudice as that which tangles the modern authorities upon public speaking.

Blair says : " We must take care never to counterfeit

warmth without feeling it." Here is the fallacy that all self-induced warmth or feeling is dishonest, and all warmth or feeling produced by the occasion is necessarily honest. "The very aspect of a large assembly attentive to the voice of one man is sufficient to inspire that man with such elevation and warmth as gives rise to strong impressions." Now, why should the warmth inspired by an audience be more honest than that inspired by his own reflections and imagination? But "he must not allow impetuosity to carry him too far." If he may stop his warmth, or restrain it, why may he not create it? "He must not kindle too soon." If the moment for being kindled is under his control, why may not the kindling itself be subject to his will? If he is allowed to say when he shall feel the emotion, why is he not allowed to say whether he shall feel it or not? If Demosthenes, as Blair says, is to be commended for kindling his audience "by calling up the names of those who fell at Marathon," and Cicero his "by apostrophizing the Alban hills and groves," why are not Demosthenes and Cicero and Dr. Blair justified in resorting to the same or some other devices for kindling and firing their own emotions? Our teacher of the awful rules of rhetoric soon forgets his own rules, for he tells the lawyer that he must do just what he says all public speakers must avoid doing—assume the virtue of warmth if he has it not. "It has a bad effect upon his cause for him to appear indifferent or unmoved." If he is not self-reliant for his emotion, how can he avoid appearing unmoved?

Blunt, another of our setters of the public speakers to rights, says: "Eloquence must be the voice of one earnestly endeavoring to deliver his own soul." Sup-

pose we have no soul to deliver, or a miserable wee squeak of a soul. We will squeak in delivering it. "Must be the outpouring of ideas rushing for vent." Suppose we have to speak without ideas, or those we have do not rush? "Must be the Psalmist's experience, the untutored effort of a heart hot within till the fire kindles, and at the last speaks with his tongue." Suppose we have the experience of the wretched hack of a lecturer who must speak, tutored or untutored, or take board at the poor-house. But that is not all. "It must be the prophet's experience, a word in the heart as a burning fire shut up in his bones, so that he is weary of forbearing and cannot stay." But how is one to have the experience of a Hebrew prophet if one is only an American parson over a small church and a large family?

The self-reliance indispensable for the highest success in public speaking keeps the speaker superior to his surroundings, and never allows his surroundings to get the upper hand of him. He is not to fail because his audience does. Let the audience be ever so small, and the circumstances ever so disheartening, he is to "come up smiling" and go through his performance with the best credit to himself—or, rather, to his art. This is the art spirit, and the more we are possessed with it the higher the quality of our success, whatever be its quantity. The best training for speaking well under the most favorable circumstances is speaking as well as you can under the most disadvantageous circumstances.

The speaker who has no self-reliance, and is entirely dependent upon his surroundings for his "earnestness," is the speaker who knows the least of how to make the most of his surroundings—the high tide of the occasion



and the high tide of his own emotions. This provision against the emergency when the heaven over us is brass and the audience around us is brass, too, provides also for those tides in the affairs of men—religious, reformatory, or political—which are taken at the flood by preacher or agitator, and lead on to vast results.

## THE ART OF BEING NATURAL.

AH ! now we have it. "Be natural," and you'll be right. All you have to do is to do right. This is the one be-all and the end-all of our setters of the world to rights. Why should it not be the panacea for the setters of the speakers to rights? It is very evident that two definitions of the word natural are playing leap-frog in the minds of those who are forever and ever prescribing it to preachers. One of these definitions is: The delivery that comes to the speaker when he gets upon his legs before an audience; the other definition is: Graceful deportment and effectiveness of speech. The former is the true definition, but the latter is the predominant one in the public mind of the speaker's critics, and the "little member" of the audience. This is illustrated by the fact that the examples of the "natural" style pointed out for our imitation are those speakers who are naturally graceful and effective, while those who are naturally awkward and ineffective are held up as warnings. If there is some inconsistency with this in the habit of invoking John the Baptist and Saul of Tarsus as examples, it is only another illustration of the fact that the speaker's critics have a zeal of oratory, but not according to common sense. As well expect to preach in the Baptist's camel's-hair shawl. The rhetoric of the forerunner was as "natural" to him as his costume. And his one-headed exhortation was as natural

as (alas !) are our hydra-headed discourses. The crab and the trout are equally natural ; so are the eagle and the muscovy duck.

The effective preacher is indebted to " nature " for his efficiency, and the ineffective preacher may complain of nature for his deficiency. Both are in earnest, both are themselves, both are full of the subject, both have faith (perhaps the inefficient one more than the other), and there is a bare possibility that the "unnatural" one would go down to his house every Sunday justified rather than the other.

This " natural " theory is to be found in Whately's rhetoric. He advocates the " natural manner," and defines it as " that manner which one naturally falls into when really speaking in earnest—with mind exclusively intent upon what we have to say." The truth is, as we have seen, that the most in earnest are often the most ineffective, because indistinct and slovenly. They are " exclusively intent upon what they have to say," and that is the reason why they exclude all reference or attention from the art of saying it. Take for illustration an example of this Archbishop Whately himself ! Here is his " natural manner " as described by a contemporary :

Whately's  
" Natural  
Manner."

" He goes through his addresses in so clumsy and inanimate a way that noble lords at once come to the conclusion that nothing so befits him as unbroken silence. He speaks in so low a tone as to be inaudible to those who are any distance from him. And not only is his voice low in its tones, but it is unpleasant from its monotony. In his manner (natural manner ?) there is not a particle of life or spirit. You would fancy his grace to be half asleep while speaking. You see so little

appearance of consciousness about him that you can hardly help doubting whether his legs will support him until he has finished his address."

If that is the manner that naturally comes to the speaker whose mind is exclusively intent upon what he has to say, and it certainly is, would it not be well to try a manner that will give the speaker a little more appearance of consciousness and the audience a little more confidence in its speaker's legs?

Suppose you have what is called family discipline in your house, as your grandfather, possibly your father, had in his house. It would not proceed upon the idea, would it, that the boy should be left to adopt the manners that come to him? You would not begin and end your instruction by saying: Be natural, my boy, and you will be right; or, Be in earnest, and you will soon learn how to keep your feet off the chair-rung, and your stare off the visitor; or, Be yourself, and you will never pick your teeth at the table, or your nose in the church. Would you not the rather take for granted that the manners which come to a boy when left to himself and his comrades of the public school are the wrong ones? And would you not endeavor by a combination of his will and yours to so work upon his sense of decorum as to give him a new set of natural manners? As you would do with your naturally bad-mannered boy, you should do with your naturally bad-mannered self if you are a preacher or a lawyer. There are a few speakers of whom it may be said they are justified in preserving and using the delivery which comes to them when they get upon their legs. Of every one of the remainder we may say their natural delivery is wrong, or not right, or it is more or less ineffective. They should somewhat change, or altogether alter, the

delivery which comes to them, or substitute another which they compel to come to them.

The difficulty with most of them is that they adopt, acquiesce in, and hence cultivate by practice the delivery which comes to them, which delivery is ineffective. Or it is not so effective as another which they could acquire, if they (1) were conscious of their defect, (2) roused themselves to reflect upon it, and (3) set themselves to remedy it.

The elocution, too, that comes to the speaker when he comes to the audience is perfectly natural to him, though it may be far from the most effective elocution for him. It may be natural and wrong. It is therefore his duty to acquire an elocution which will be natural and right.

**A Natural  
Elocution May  
be Right or  
Wrong.**

You say of a speaker, he does not use that elocution in private conversation, why does he use it in public speaking. His conversational elocution is natural, his public elocution is unnatural. No, his public elocution is just as natural to him as his private elocution. It is the elocution with its emphases and cadences that comes to him when he speaks in public or talks in private. Here is his difficulty ; he knows how to speak to a friend on the street, he does not know how to speak to one hundred friends in the hall or church. In the first place, he takes for granted, what has always been taken for granted, that the elocution of public speaking is radically different from the elocution of private talking. That is a blunder as embarrassing as it is egregious—a blunder, indeed, sufficient of itself to disconcert and throw any one who stands before an audience for the first time. What with the embarrassment caused by the presence of an audience, or audience-fright, and the

embarrassment caused by this misapprehension, it is no wonder that the speaker falls into all manner of cadences, emphatics, and theatrics, bellowings, and whisperings, and inarticulate earnestnesses that cleave the general ear without even so much as making itself intelligible to the general intellect.

In private conversation the speaker may have a defective elocution from lack of will, and knowing what he and his elocution are about; but in his public discourse his elocution is incomparably more defective for the two reasons that have just been given. It is a curious fact, and another fact illustrating the individuality of the art of public speaking, that a man who can hardly utter a sentence without blundering in private will deliver a speech remarkably correct in syntax. Few, however, speak as well before an audience as they do before a friend or two, in the matter of elocution.

Here we are again upon the question of constancy. The elocution of the actor and reader may be laid away when not in use; the elocution of the speaker should be, must be always in use. He may practise the articulation, enunciation, the orotund voice and the ear for cadence and vocabulary, in his private conversation as well as in his public speech.

The necessity for this is self-evident when you reflect that the colloquial element is the fundamental and predominant element of all public speaking. In scientific lecturing, in all teaching by lecturing, it is, indeed, the only element. And when we remember how much of teaching is done by lecturing, we can form some idea of the importance to be attached to a distinct, vivacious, and vigorous colloquial elocution. It may be cultivated indefinitely. "He is a good talker" is a compliment worthy of any public speaker's ambition. From the



colloquial elocution the speaker may rise into the dramatic or oratorical, but his mainstay and stronghold is the conversational.

A good elocutionary instinct is invaluable to the speaker, and he should learn how to discipline and regulate it. His will should have it under control, and he should not allow it to be disconcerted or embarrassed by the audience, or the arbitrary rules of the professional emphasizers. He learns the "time" and rhythm of speech just as the newsboy learns it—by the practice of the elocutionary instinct. The newsboy who cries his paper perfectly on the street would fail if asked to do it on the platform before an audience. The audience throws him just as it does the speaker. His cadences and all the cadences known to song, chant, sermon, or speech are perfectly natural. To be right they must be regulated by art.

**The Natural  
Cadences to  
be Regulated  
by Art.**

The head-notes of the American speaker are just as natural to him as the Briton's chest-notes are to him, or the German's guttural is to him just as natural as the climate that causes them. All the whines and twangs and tones and intones and cadences to which public speakers are addicted are perfectly natural. Nature gives us the cadence of the English Church clergy, the several American pulpit cadences, the Southern inflection and the New England, the pioneer Methodists' and the scholarly Presbyterians'. From the same source we obtain also the intoned services of the Catholics in their cathedrals, and the Druids in the "vast cathedral of nature," the chantings in the Jewish synagogue and heathen temple, as well as the intonations of the newsboy as he cries his paper on the street, and of the porter as he fills the hotel with the next train's departure, and of

the dog who throws up his nose and bays at midnight in response to a distant salutation.

There are places, such as the cathedrals, where the Italian preachers produce their powerful effects by a prolongation of the vowels, and outdoors, where the Greek orators to this day are obliged to obey the same law. We Americans need not speak in the undulatory cadences of the cathedral orators, because we do not speak in cathedrals. The Italian preacher is so highly endowed with the elocutionary instinct (as all the Southern and Eastern races are) that he has more variety and diversity in his elocution than we have with all our advantage of smaller place and audience. I shall remember the preachers I heard, in common with twenty thousand persons, in St. Peter's during the Ecumenical Council, so long as memory holds her seat. It seemed, indeed, as if the oratorical instinct could no farther go. The sentiment could be followed by following the gesticulation.

The Greeks and Romans spoke with a strongly marked cadence. Their elocution of both the stage and the rostrum was a kind of recitative, sometimes set to music and accompanied by instruments.

The reading aloud which is still common on the highways of the East is done with an undulatory cadence, and with a swinging of the body and head as if to keep time. No wonder that, as the eunuch's elocution was very much like that which we hear in the pulpits of our day, Philip should have asked the reader if he understood what he read.

As for the religious aspect of this question, it deserves all the ridicule which it receives. There is only one thing more ludicrous about the sanctimonious whine than the whine itself, and that is the unconscious use of it by

really devout and otherwise sensible men. However, even that is perfectly natural. It is as natural for man as it is for his dog to whine. No animal makes a sound that is not natural to him.

The Welsh *hywl* has been attributed by some writers to ~~the~~ Welsh temperament, and by a recent one—Mr. Owen Jones—to the same origin from which our Puritan forefathers were supposed to derive their “nasal psalmody”—viz., “the divine spirit.” But temperaments far away from Wales geographically, mentally, and religiously are addicted to a similar cadence. It is nature, human nature, and that continually, and that everywhere. It is the instinct for doing a thing and saying a thing in the easiest possible way asserting itself in a man who has so much to say that it is no wonder he seeks, and finds, and practises the easiest possible way.

This intonation, or cadence, or dwelling on the syllable, or prolonging the vowel sounds, is a provision of nature against a contingency. **A Provision of Nature Against a Contingency.** It is the elocutionary instinct exacting the prolongation, in order to be heard. The intone is easier to speak and easier to be heard. But it is equally natural for us to fall into the intone as a habit without reference to the contingency. Why? Because Nature seeks her ease, as water seeks its level. The monotones we hear so much, and hear criticised so much, are universal because they are the easiest tones or cadences in which to make a speech in public, but not for making a remark in private. People say of their preacher: He does not whine it off in that manner when he converses, why should he when he preaches? The answer is obvious. Nature, who takes the delivery that comes to her (or him), whether in pulpit or drawing-room, finds the staccato easiest in the latter, and the

intone easiest in the former. This intonation, or chant, has an ally in our indolence—in an indolent, if not an inert will. It is the universal way of speaking because it is the easiest way of speaking, and it is the easiest way because it is the natural way. There is an African chant precisely like that of the Quaker preacher. It is the chant that comes to preachers when they get upon their legs before their congregation, and simply want to “be natural” and forget themselves and think only of their subject.

If you would know how much easier you can speak in the Quaker sing-song than even in your own, which may not be so complete or arbitrary, try it. I broke myself of an intone which grew out of the New England literary one, only to fall into another which I heard in Scotland. Sometimes a speaker is discredited for imitation, when he is trying to extricate himself from its meshes. If you have imitation large do not use it for the amusement of your friends. Some Americans have learned (unconsciously) to drop their H’s by imitating that defect in the English. And let it never be forgotten that where they drop one H, we drop one hundred and one other little matters and things of the highest importance in elocution, such as ed, ing, ow, etc. No American pronounces his r or er. If you doubt this, listen when you try to say North or New York. Let us take the beams out of Jonathan’s mouth, that he may have more excuse for taking the motes out of John’s. This is done by turning the will upon our mouths, and keeping it turned thitherward until the remedy is effected. Keep the will away from the bronchitis, but turn it with all the might upon the precipitate shrieks.

Such is the depravity of the will that it is delighted to

be turned upon the member for its injury, but sullenly refuses to budge when it is desired to effect a cure of the disordered part. It leaps with alacrity to give a preacher the laryngitis, or the hypograndia, and will not stir when implored to prevent him from being so much "in earnest" as to be inarticulate, and so "natural" as to fail in every excellence which goes to constitute an effective speaker.

Inflection is to be left to the elocutionary instinct, to the ear for inflection. It is not to be learned from such a rule as this, for example, which I find in one of the books of elocution.

Inflection and  
Emphasis to  
be Left to the  
Training of the  
Elocutionary  
Instinct.

Rule I.—Whenever the sense of a sentence, or clause of a sentence, is as yet incomplete or suspended, then the rising inflection is to be used, as in the following :

"I am sùre, were the noble lórd's as wéll acquainted as *I* am with but hálf the difficulty and délays occasioned in the cóurts of jústice under the preténce of prívilege, they wóuld not—nay, cóuld not—oppóse this bill."

I am sure, were the noble lord as well acquainted as I am with but half the difficulty and delay occasioned by trying to speak his speech according to such a rule as this, he would thank me for delivering him from it and inducing him to try his own ear upon his own inflections.

Another of the rules of the elocutionist is : "Pause before and after the emphatic word, and put a circumflex on it."

Where did you get this rule ?

From conversation.

Finding that we do this naturally, let us do it mechanically. We do it by instinct in private talking, let us do it by rule in public speaking. Finding that while eating

every time your elbow bends your mouth flies open, therefore this rule : When your elbow bends, open your mouth ! Nonsense ! Leave the pauses, emphasis, and circumflex where you found them, and cultivate the ear for pauses, emphasis, and circumflex. If you deprive the speaker of his pauses and emphases and inflections, what is there left for his brains ?

Walker is the father or grandfather of this attempt to reduce the art of public speaking to an elocutionary science, and failed, as he confessed in one of his prefaces.

He and all his disciples proceed upon the assumption that in order to acquire the proper emphasis for your speech or sermon, you have only to commit to memory the emphases which they dictate for certain passages which they select from Shakespeare or Milton.

Even if their emphasis were necessarily the correct one for the passage which they select, it is not of the slightest use in the attempt to find the emphasis of your speech on the tariff, or your sermon on Self-Deception. Suppose the preacher does repeat the Lord's Prayer with the emphasis and pauses and devout grimaces of his teacher, what then ? Does it follow that the teacher was right ? And if he was wrong his pupil will repeat his blunders in so set and stereotyped a way as to preclude all possibility of his reform.

The books on elocution, the "Speakers" and "Readers" will even give you the "time," as though they were teaching instrumental music. To subject the actor to such a harness is bad enough, but to put it upon the public speaker is worse—it is fatal. "Time" in music is fixed, though even then it is sometimes defied by genius ; but in public speaking it is indispensable that it be unfixed and left to the elocutionary instinct, the will, the mood, the judgment, the tact, the ear for



emphasis, inflection, and modulation. "Come, thou fount of every blessing" may have very different time in the music than it has in the supplicatory elocution of the speaker, or, for that matter, the reciter. The emphasis of the Lord's Prayer depends upon which idea or feeling of it is emphatic in the one who repeats it. The best preachers sometimes get their "heads" out of the words of their text, emphasizing each in its turn, as : Our, and Father, and heaven, etc.

The elocutionist picks up these "renderings" of the stage and peddles them out to the preachers, who in turn manage to pick them up by mimicry and memory ; so that they may be able finally to render "To be or not to be" as emphatically as their teacher ; but to be or not to be benefited, that is the question. Whether it is nobler to endure this nonsense longer, or take up arms against it and reform it altogether, for, whatever help it may be to the player or reciter, it is not only not helpful, it is positively mischievous to the speaker.

A few speakers have the elocutionary instinct in a high state of development to begin with, a few more have it in so sensitive and teachable a condition that it is soon brought to a high state of development ; but the great majority have it in so low and torpid a state to begin with, and the will is also so low and torpid, that the instinct gets but little beyond its original state and condition.

Inflection and emphasis—in fact, everything that concerns public speaking, is to be left, not to "nature," by which is meant nobody and nothing, but to the training of the judgment, instinct, reason, tact.

Some will even go to the elocutionist for their gestures, or the rules by which their gestures are to be created and regulated. Imagine the

**Gesticulation  
by Rule.**

speaker, imagine Whitefield, Bossuet, Fox, Clay, or Gladstone making his gestures with this rule in his mind and—hands !

“ When the hand has once been brought into action in gesture, instead of dropping to the side, and then being brought up again for a similar purpose, *it should generally remain in its position till relieved by the other hand*, or till it passes into a state of preparation for a succeeding gesture.”

Would you do nothing about gestures ? I would leave them to the eye of the speaker, urging him to see to the training of his eye for the movements of his legs and arms. Besides, pruning is perilous. Awkwardness and strength are often inseparable in man, as well as the ox.

Some of the most effective speakers are personally awkward. Their “ natural manner ” would be grotesque but for the oratory that comes with it, and is, indeed, inseparable from it. Prune them, and you destroy them. Their awkwardness would pass from their gesticulation to their thought or language, or both. Few of the Scotch preachers are graceful, and few but what have force and galvanic power. Alexander Duff held up the left half of his coat-tail under his left arm, and even sometimes bit his finger-ends in the midst of his most impressive oratorical flights. Arnot, Candlish, Macleod, Cairns—none of them were up in the awful rules for the “ palm gesture,” the dancing attitudes, or the “ rising inflection.” Would you spoil a dancing-master to make a preacher, or a preacher to make a dancing-master ?

The learning of gesticulation, attitudes, and the like under the tuition of a professional elocutionist cannot but belittle the great art of public speaking in the esti-

mation of the speaker. The very thought of it is enfeebling, and makes him, or ought to make him, feel ashamed of himself. It ought to make him feel as silly as he looks.

Did you ever know a professional elocutionist or teacher of emphasis and gesture, or, in a word, the teacher of the imitative system of elocution, to be a public speaker? Some of them are excellent public readers, few have ever excelled as actors; nevertheless, they are really of great service to those who wish to play, recite, or read, because these arts are so largely concerned with a merely mechanical "rendering" of certain pieces of dramatic composition which may be learned by rote. A fair memory, a fair voice, a fair instinct for mimicry, and, if the person be a lady, a fair show in the flesh, not to speak of the artifices of costume, and you have the public reader with testimonials even overtopping those that burden the circular of the rising "Cicero of America." Wonder if Cicero called himself the Snicklefritz of Rome?

The art of being natural in rhetoric is the result of genius with a few, with a Goldsmith, perhaps; but it is the fruit of much cultivation in the most of us, whether writers or speakers. When Jacobi was congratulated upon the ease with which he wrote, he replied: "You have little idea of the labor I expend in attaining perspicuity." He sometimes copied five times. Rousseau wrote "Emile" nine times over. Schiller was as painstaking, and even Goldsmith spent three years on the "Deserted Village." Moore thought nothing of spending one month on one song, and Burns mooned for hours before he put pen to paper. Disraeli's wonderful impromptu invective deceived the multitude, but the initi-

**A Natural  
Rhetoric to be  
Acquired.**

ated could easily detect Burke's form in Disraeli's sarcasms, as well as his cadences in Macaulay's descriptions. Johnson said Addison was the master to study for Parliamentary style. The orator "should give his days and nights to Addison." Edward Irving followed Barrow and Jeremy Taylor. Pitt was, perhaps, one of the most striking examples of study and painstaking in the acquisition of vocabulary and style. Bishop Burnet was scarcely less studious of expression. Cardinal Newman, one of the greatest masters of vocabulary and rhythm and cadence in rhetoric, has given an account of the mental discipline to which he subjected himself in order to create the natural style which has made him famous.

"Because my style is easy and natural," said Kean, "they think I don't study, and talk about the sudden impulse of genius. There is no such thing. All is studied beforehand. The speeches which, to my certain knowledge, sounded most impromptu were the most carefully studied beforehand. Furthermore, what is popularly known as the impulse of genius is the result of long training in vocabulary, in improvisation, and in handling audiences."

The late Thomas Buckle, we are told, studied style for "force and clearness," and as he certainly attained these two qualities, it is useful to those who do not get their rhetoric by inspiration to know by what method he made the attainment. While studying style practically for his own future use, he had been in the habit of taking a subject, whether argument or narrative, from some author—Burke, for instance—and to write himself, following, of course, the same line of thought, and then comparing his passage with the original, analyzing the

**How Buckle  
Acquired Force  
and Clearness.**

different treatment, so as to make it evident to himself where and how he had failed to express the meaning with the same vigor, or terseness, or simplicity. Force and clearness were his principal aim.

Force and clearness are very suitable qualifications for the public speaker, and he may copy Mr. Buckle's method of securing it with advantage. He will never attain Buckle's "vigor, terseness, or simplicity" without cultivating Buckle's rhetorical ear for vigor, terseness, and simplicity.

The art of being natural in the rhetoric or delivery of public speaking is acquired, not by the rules of the books, but by an exercise of the will, the rhetorical judgment, and the rhetorical taste; by knowing what you are about, by making the most of yourself, by a study of rhetoric, and the practice of it.

Landseer says when a color does not suit him, he scrapes it off and tries another. So does the artist with his colors in rhetoric.

Sometimes this method, this exercise of the will, is slow in bearing fruit. Success comes slowly, and despair may come instead of success, because the ambition is greater than the voice, or the oratorical temperament, or the sense of rhetoric, or the ear for elocution, or, perhaps, if the wretched hero had only held out a little longer his ambition would have been gratified.

Sir James Graham exclaimed after repeated failures: "I have tried it every way—extempore, committing to memory, speaking from notes—and I cannot do it. I don't know why it is, but I am afraid I shall never succeed." But he did succeed. By sheer perseverance in the use of his will he overcame his lack of qualification for public speaking, and became a speaker of great

**This Method  
may be Slow in  
Bearing Fruit.**

repute in the House of Commons. Lacordaire, Frenchman though he was, was so deficient in the Frenchman's adaptation to the rostrum that he failed utterly in several attempts, and everybody said : " He is a man of talent, but he will never be a preacher." Two years after he was entrancing thousands in the Notre Dame Cathedral, and was compared with Massillon and Bossuet. It was a triumph, not of elocution lessons, or practice in gesticulation and emphasis, but of the will, and the judgment, and self-reliance.



## VI.

### THE DRAMATIC ELEMENT IN PUBLIC SPEAKING.

It is a mischievous assumption of the elocutionists that the art of the actor and the art of the speaker are one and the same art, and are to be taught in the same way, and governed by the same fixed rules. Preachers will join in the odious comparison designed to exalt the seriousness and earnestness, not to say reverence and piety, of the dramatic profession at the expense of their own. Anecdotes are artfully contrived to set off the extraordinary fidelity of the actor and the reprehensible unfaithfulness of the preacher, and are served up with much gusto by the preacher ! One of them runs thus :

Preacher to actor : “ How is it that you who deal in fiction have more effect upon an audience than we who deal in truth ? ”

A Fallacious  
Anecdote  
Made to Order.

Actor to preacher : “ Because we speak fiction as if it were truth, and you speak truth as if it were fiction.”

Antithetical sparkle and transparent twaddle. The anecdote factory revels in antithesis. What endowments in the way of witticism and criticism we confer upon our man of straw ! When the young missionary had related his imaginary controversy with a pagan, showing how he would overwhelm the pagan, the aged bishop remarked : “ You should choose a cleverer pagan, my son ! ” If a preacher really did ask this question of an actor he made

an ass of himself, as doth every preacher who goes hat in hand to an actor to beg an anecdote designed to elevate the actor's art at the expense of his own. I will ask you a stupid question, O tragedian ! and you shall give me a stingingly antithetical reply, and I will demean myself by circulating your reply for the mortification of the clergy. So does the preacher deliberately join hands with the gesticulationists and tragedians in sneering at his own sincerity and covering his own motives with contempt.

Even the antithesis is at fault. Fiction and fact are more accurately antithetical than fiction and truth, since a fiction may be to all intents and purposes the truth. The parables of the New Testament, for example, are both fictitious and truthful. They are not a narrative of facts, but are faithful to life, nevertheless, as all fictitious creations designed to teach morality or religion should be.

To say that the actor speaks fiction as if it were truth, is to say that he tells a lie so successfully that the audience receive it as the truth, which is preposterous. And to say that the preacher speaks truth as if it were fiction must mean, if it means anything, that he tells the truth in such a way as to compel the audience to regard it as falsehood, which is also preposterous. There are preachers, perhaps, who dispense one set of doctrines from the pulpit, and quite another set of doctrines from their study-chair. But these preachers are not alluded to in this anecdote. Then as to the "effect upon the audience"—would you compare the effect produced by, say, the most effective preaching, with the effect produced by the most effective acting ? What similarity is there between your state of mind in looking upon the representation of "Hamlet" or the "American Cousin,"

and your state of mind while listening to a sermon on the parable of the Prodigal Son?

Another preacher asks an actor (Garriek he is called in this anecdote) how a sermon ought to be delivered, and the actor replies: "You know how you would feel and speak in a drawing-room concerning a friend who was in imminent danger of his life, and with what energetic pathos of diction and countenance you would enforce the observance of what you really thought would be for his preservation. You would be yourself, and the interesting nature of the subject impressing your heart would furnish you with the most natural tone of voice, the most proper language, the most engaging features, and the most suitable and graceful gestures. What you would be in the drawing-room be in the pulpit, and you will not fail to please, to affect, and to profit."

**An Actor Tells  
a Preacher  
How a Sermon  
is to be  
Delivered.**

Now, do you know exactly how you would feel and speak in a drawing-room concerning a friend who was in imminent danger of his life? Dickens's description of what was felt and said and done at the inn, where and when little Nell was in imminent danger of her life, is no caricature. The fact is, that under the circumstances imagined you are about as likely to do the wrong thing as the right thing, or you might do the right thing in the wrong way, and in the midst of your "energetic pathos" tumble over the piano-stool, and break your own neck, if not that of your friend as well. It is perfectly natural for some people to lose their heads just when their heads are most needed. The "interesting nature" of the fact that a friend had fallen headlong in a fit, might furnish you with the most natural tone of voice in the way of a shriek, and the most naturally absurd

behavior. You might very naturally, considering your absorbing interest in your friend's peril, hand your friend the inkstand instead of the hartshorn-vial to smell. When the babe swallowed the marble, the father swooned away, but the mother up-ended the infant, squeezed the marble out of him, and then restored her "natural protector" by the "most suitable and graceful gestures," such as pulling his nose and boxing his ears. It is so difficult to tell exactly what we would do if a friend should tumble down at the party, that it does not help us much to be instructed to do the same when we discourse from the pulpit. Many a person who thought he would know exactly what to do if he should see another person drowning was, when the exigency came, as successfully useless as any of the rest of the spectators, who excelled in nothing but the "energetic pathos of diction and countenance." I speak from experience. I saw about five hundred people spin round on their axis once while a man was in imminent danger of his life from drowning, and I spun round with the same "natural tone of voice" and the same "energetic pathos of diction and countenance."

I venture to say that if Garriek's instructions had been followed by his preacher, Garriek would have been the first to leave the house in disgust. He would ask : "What is the matter with the parson ? Is he mad ?" And I would reply : "No, those are the engaging features and graceful gestures and natural tones of voice which he used in the drawing-room while fetching the hartshorn for a friend who had fainted from a lack of ventilation, and was consequently in imminent danger of his life." To see the absurdity of this advice to the preachers we have only to ask : Should a preacher behave in the pulpit as though he were rescuing a man

from drowning, or nursing him out of a fainting fit? If ever the occasion for such behavior should arise, it would be an occasion similar to that which is perpetual on the boards of a theatre. What is occasional with the speaker is perpetual with the actor.

I suspect that something of the nature of theatrical earnestness is running in the heads of these anecdotes, and the suspicion is confirmed by the next anecdote by which I will illustrate our topic.

The bishop to the actor, who in this instance is Betterton : “ What is the reason that whole audiences should be moved to tears, and have all sorts of passions excited, at the representation of some story on the stage, which they knew to be feigned, and in the event of which they were not at all concerned ; yet that the same persons should sit so utterly unmoved at discourses from the pulpit, upon subjects of the utmost importance to them, relative not only to their temporal, but also their eternal interests ?”

**Theatrical  
Earnestness.**

The actor to the bishop : “ My lord, it is because we are in earnest.” What are we to think of the self-respect of a bishop who makes so humiliating a confession to an actor, and gives the actor so excellent an opportunity to make that humiliation worse? My lord, it is because we actors are in earnest and you preachers are fooling! Was the bishop warranted in judging all “ discourses from the pulpit” by his own? Would Whitefield or Lacordaire be likely to put such a question to Betterton? Was not Garrick far more likely to put the question reversed to Whitefield? Besides, was the bishop’s “ unmoved ” audience “ the same persons ” who were “ moved to tears ” by Betterton’s “ earnestness ”? Again, does it never occur to this bishop or any other of these reverend fathers and brethren who revel

in these anecdotes, to their own disgrace, that, according to their own confession and profession, they are not in the business, and that the actors are in the business of “exciting all sorts of passions by the representation of some story which they know to be feigned, and in the event of which they are not at all concerned”? Does it never occur to them that it is very much easier to make a man cry over a feigned story, or even a real one, than it is to make him abandon the very sins over which he is boo-hooing in the story? Betterton might have moved David to tears with the feigned story of the ewe lamb without compelling him to do what the prophet’s preaching did—restore the lamb and quit wife-stealing. Better Nathan’s method without tears than Betterton’s with. The actor does not profess to save men from sin, or women from men.

“Because we are in earnest.” What are you in earnest about? The representation of “feigned stories” to “excite all sorts of passions,” and move the nervous system to tears. This is theatrical earnestness, and is, as I have already insisted, an example to the preacher in so far as it means physical earnestness and self-reliance, in so far as it is compelling yourself to come to time, and compelling yourself to make the most of yourself when you stand before an audience. But to suppose that the preacher must necessarily be theatrical or dramatic in manner or delivery in order to insure the success of his “discourses from the pulpit upon subjects of the highest importance,” is another of the flagrant errors that come of confounding the art of the actor with the art of the speaker. Some of the most effective speaking has been done by speakers who stuck to the colloquial element in both the manner and the matter of their discourses, whether scientific lectures, regulation



sermons, or reformatory speeches. They were and are in earnest, physically, mentally, and morally, but not theatrically or histrionically in earnest. President Finney, one of the best reasoners the pulpit of this country has ever known, spoke uniformly in a conversational style, but he was in earnest, oppressively so sometimes. Never was there a more self-reliant speaker, or one that had a more complete control of himself, or who knew better what he and his audience were about. His elocution was in keeping with his argumentative style. The dramatic element would have been ridiculously out of keeping with it.

Demosthenes is quoted to justify this confounding of the art of the actor and the art of the speaker. The quotation is as illustrious as it is fallacious. He gave as the three requisites for oratory, action—action—action. I asked Thomas Carlyle what he thought of this, and he gave me the following reply, which is now published for the first time :

A Letter  
from Carlyle  
on what  
Demosthenes  
Said.

“ According to Demosthenes, as all the world knows, the thrice first requisite for eloquence is action. Not till lately did I ever ask myself what strictly did he mean by action? Is it swinging of the arms, attitude, gesticulation, and the like? What especially is the Greek word he uses? After search I at last discovered that it was *upockrisis*, play-acting, hypocrisy, persuading everybody that you are speaking from the heart. In which opinion I thoroughly agreed with Demosthenes, so far as Demosthenes went. But at once there rose within me this second much more important question: Why in the name of all the gods, when a wretched creature is speaking, not from the heart, but only, with great art or little, pretending to do it, why do not other human creatures

rise upon him with horror and terror, and the peremptory order, scandalous, mendacious phantasm, pretending to be human and real, cease ! Under pain of whipping, and at length hanging, no more of that. To me privately the stump orator is a quite alarming phenomenon, though, alas ! I know him to be for long times yet an inevitable one. May he become extinct one day, as the Dodo has done." The stump orator has just run his course in Great Britain again, and the more of buncomb and striving after wind he perpetrated, the more nearly he followed the stump oratory of the author of "Fighting Niagara." But I never think of thee without admiration and a big thrill, glorious old stump orator, "stumbling blindly, undismayed, down to thy rest."

There can be no doubt of the meaning of Demosthenes, although the elocution books have substituted the Latin translation for it, and call it action. Demosthenes said and meant acting—acting—acting. He meant precisely what we would mean if we should say : The three requisites for public speaking are : Be dramatic—be dramatic—be dramatic. Or as though we should say : Be histrionic ; or, behave in the pulpit, and on the rostrum, exactly as the actors behave on the stage.

Demosthenes' advice is as easy of explanation as its fallacy is of refutation. The orators of his day looked to the stage for their examples. With them, the object of public speaking was very similar to that of public acting—a means for making a temporary impression, or for rousing to immediate and precipitate action. Not to dwell upon this point, which could be made exceedingly interesting and instructive, suffice it to say here that the public speaking to which Demosthenes refers in this

triple requisite is what we call dramatic oratory proper, or the oratorical element so expanded as to exclude all other elements.

This may be very properly done by some speakers—Gough, for instance—and on some occasions, but that it comprises the whole of public speaking as we understand and practise that art is obviously inadmissible. Nine tenths of our speaking is necessarily colloquial, as I have before remarked. It is didactic, it is teaching, it is conveying information. Even where it is controversial, as in a deliberative body, it may be more effective to be colloquial than dramatic or oratorical. Even in Demosthenes' day teaching was done by lecturing, and lecturing was done on a conversational key. He would probably not call that the art of ruling the minds of men by rhetoric, or public speaking. But we do. What he had in mind was dramatic oratory, the dramatic element in public speaking, the art of the actor utilized as an element in the art of the speaker. They are kindred arts, but not the same art. No one person ever excelled in both. The history of public speaking is full of illustrations of how much the art of the speaker is indebted to the art of the actor. Nevertheless, they are very far apart in their method and object.

During the Middle Ages the people were dependent exclusively upon the drama for their knowledge of the history of the Christian religion. “Cloister and church were the first theatres, priests the first actors ; the first dramatic matter was the Passion, and the first drama the mysteries of the church.”

**Historical  
Examples of  
the Dramatic  
Element.**

The natural manner of Bossuet and Bourdaloue was impressive in the highest degree, while that of Massillon was quiet and uniform, but his pathos was dramatic.

On the margin of a sermon delivered at Bruges in 1500, the preacher reminds himself that here he is to "shriek like the devil," and of Father Honore, a long while after, it was said: "He distracts the ear, but he rends the heart."

Savonarola literally fulfilled the popular requirement and was "carried away by his subject," for he ran out of the pulpit, but only to produce a paroxysm of religious fanaticism, which was succeeded by a return of the old levity and vice. The fact that Dante's works were in the pile of immoral literature that was burned before him proves how utterly untrustworthy are the effects produced by earnestness in the popular sense of that word. The gamblers at Nuremberg burning their dice in the streets under the spell of dramatic earnestness exercised by the Franciscan missionaries is another example. Others might be noted as the result of the preaching of Bernardine and of Friar Richard of Paris.

It is worthy of note that "the golden age" of the French pulpit was what is popularly understood as an age of earnestness in the pulpit. It was dramatic earnestness, physical earnestness, and had no more permanent effect upon the vices of society than the undemonstrative sermons of the preceding age. Kings and their mistresses listened with equal unconcern to the theatrical anathemas of the pulpit. Louis said they "made him feel uncomfortable, but not long." Indeed, the toleration of the clergy was owing to their ineffectiveness, whether they spoke with Massillon's persuasive eloquence or Bossuet's impressive gestures.

Edward Irving's almost violence of manner and elocution was saved from intolerable rant by the skill with which he used the dramatic element with which he was largely endowed by nature, and which he cultivated as-

siduously. His influence was evanescent from the unsanity of his teachings. They rejoiced for a time in the light of a meteor.

Erskine carried the dramatic element to as high a pitch at the bar as Irving did in the pulpit. Lord Abinger says of him :

“ To his parts as an orator he added those of a consummate actor. His eye, his countenance, the action of his limbs and body, were full of expression, elegance, and dignity. . . . I am satisfied that if one who had not understood the language had merely seen his action and heard the various tones and modulation of his voice, he could not but have experienced considerable pleasure and excitement from the exhibition.”

I can never forget the imposing manner and dramatic action of Bishop Mermillod of Geneva, or Strossmayer of Hungary, or Gatty of the Madeleine at Paris. I heard the great southern preachers of the Œcumenical Council, or, rather, so vast was the audience, and so foreign was the language of the preachers, and so bad were the acoustic properties of Michael Angelo's architecture, that I could only see the great preachers ; but they were so dramatic and pantomimic that one could not fail to be impressed.

Whitefield came nearer to the Demosthenic standard than is possible with many speakers of our Western race. He utilized the histrionic art in public speaking beyond any other preacher of his age and tongue. The actors heard him with envy. Garrick was jealous of the skill and grace with which he handled his handkerchief. His manners, it is said, captivated the fastidious Chesterfield, he extorted admiration from the philosophical Bolingbroke, and the elegant sceptic,

Whitefield's  
Use of the  
Dramatic  
Element.

David Hume, went great distances to hear doctrines that he detested delivered in a style that fascinated him.

Whitefield's studious and painstaking devotion to the three great requisites was evident in his preference for revised-over new sermons. They were improved in delivery by delivery, and he knew well how to improve them. Benjamin Franklin said his delivery was so improved by frequent repetition, and every emphasis and modulation became so perfectly timed, that without being interested in the subject one could not help being pleased with the discourse—a pleasure of much the same kind as that received from an excellent piece of music. Garrick and Foote agreed that Whitefield's oratory "was not at its full height until he had repeated a discourse forty times."

When Whitefield acted an old blind man advancing by slow steps toward the edge of the precipice, Lord Chesterfield started up and cried: "Good God, he is gone!" And when the seamen heard and saw his description of the ship on her beam-ends, they sprang to their feet and shouted: "The long-boat—take to the long-boat!" This scene is worth reproducing.

Suddenly assuming a nautical air and manner that were irresistible, he thus suddenly broke in with: "Well, my boys, we have a clear sky, and are making fine headway over a smooth sea before a light breeze, and we shall soon lose sight of land. But what means this sudden lowering of the heavens, and that dark cloud arising from beneath the western horizon? Hark! Don't you hear distant thunder? Don't you see those flashes of lightning? There is a storm gathering! Every man to his duty! How the waves rise and dash against the ship! The air is dark!—the tempest rages!—our masts are gone!—the ship is on her beam-ends!



What next ?” This appeal instantly brought the sailors to their feet, with a shout : “ The long-boat !—take to the long-boat !”

And yet here comes a leading London newspaper asking : “ Wherein lies the secret of Whitefield’s power ? What was the spell by which he not only enthralled the multitude, but also men of clear judgments and capacious intellects and cold hearts ? When we read Whitefield’s sermons we find nothing in them that explains this mystery. He was not a theologian ; he was not a thinker ; he had no high poetical imagination ; his diction is commonplace ; his imagery conventional ; his range of illustration limited ; and it is remarkable that he has left nothing in literature, not even in devotional literature, by which he deserves to be remembered—not a single treatise, not a hymn, not a page of a discourse. Face to face with men he did with them almost what he chose, but he had no skill to sway them by written words.”

Here is a reasonably intelligent fellow-creature who, mayhap, makes his living out of the English language, and yet does not know enough about it to know that public speaking is one method of using it, and the most effective one. He recognizes acting, and writing, and thinking as accredited departments of human endeavor, but the department and art of ruling the minds of men by an animal galvanic battery on two legs—that is a secret to him !

Still, Whitefield was far from being an actor in the full and strict sense, and would certainly have failed in that profession, notwithstanding what Stephen says, that “ he cultivated the histrionic art to a perfection which has rarely been obtained even by the most eminent of those who have trodden the stage in sock and buskin.”

But he would have found the sock and buskin very different harness from the pulpit gown. The rules of the actor are as minute as the deviation from them is serious. Cicero notes how much easier the critics were with the orators than they were with the actors, and Lucian called a blundering gesture on the stage a grave offence. A blundering gesture on the platform is sometimes inseparable from the most effective speaking.

No, with all his use of the histrionic element Whitefield was exclusively a public speaker, and is worthy of study with special reference to that point. He was self-reliant for his mesmeric and dramatic power just as the actor is, however. He made use of his will, he made the most of himself as an animal galvanic battery on two legs.

It is a common opinion that the dramatic element is more popular with an Oriental or Southern race than it is with ours. I doubt it. Running after Whitefield and his school, even after some very poor specimens of the school, disproves it. It is more a matter of fashion than of race or clime. Civilization casts off in one age what it takes on in another, whether it is inebriety in society or the dramatic element in oratory. Another Father Honore may put on a magistrate's cap and hold up the skull of a magistrate in the pulpit any Sunday, and exclaim with as much appropriateness as he of old : "Hast thou never sold justice?" Fashions, like temperature and diseases, go in waves. Public taste has its ebbs and flows. Witness the ebb and flow of the gown.

The restoration of the gown by the descendants of the Puritans, and the partiality of the young Quakers for the vestments of the "ancient order," are signs of life in the dramatic element. The gown, whether on the bench or at the bar,

**The Gown as  
an Accessory.**

whether in the pulpit or in the university lecture-room, is an auxiliary of so much importance that it is sure to survive the ignorance and fanaticism that lays it aside. Costume, as well as clouds, is controlled by law. To any that are influenced by the absurd idea that the gown means any form of religion I recommend a perusal of Dean Stanley's "Christian Institutions."

The gown's justification is in its usefulness. Besides being a useful insignia for the teacher and preacher, lawyer and judge, it is a physical accessory of positive importance. It conceals the defects of the physique. It fills out a thin man, thins out a fat one, lowers a tall man, heightens a short one, conceals awkwardness, promotes gracefulness in gesture and attitude, and withal has a friendly, warm, and genial look. Mark the incongruity between the drapery of the ladies at a fashionable wedding in an architectural church, and the impoverished and emaciated black outline of a hitching-post of an officiating minister. And to make the contrast complete and completely absurd, he wears a swallow-tail coat!

Now, this dramatic element in public speaking seems to be the only element which the elocutionists recognize, whereas it is neither the only nor the most important element.

**The Colloquial  
Element  
Wears Best.**

The colloquial is more important, more in use, more to be depended upon in the long run.

The dramatic element, however, is indispensable to some, useful to all. It may come of genius, but it may be cultivated—and should be. It can be cultivated by the cultivation of the elocutionary instinct, the rhetorical instinct, the dramatic instinct, by the training of the ear for rhetoric and the eye for rhetorical and dramatic effects. Imitation helps, and observation plays its part, but if the art of the actors and the art of the speakers

are confounded, and you undertake to acquire one by acquiring the other, you will acquire neither. The actor "renders" the Lord's Prayer, the preacher prays it. The former may use the emphasis of his teacher, the latter must use his own. Garrick and Whitefield would both fail if they changed places.

There is one objection to this professional elocutionary style, whether in reading or speaking, which is little spoken of or thought of, and that is this : it is wearying. A little of it now and then is pleasing, but it does not require much of it to pall upon the taste, like candy and ice-cream. It may do as occasional confectionery, but does not answer for a perpetual diet. Public speaking is perpetual diet. The play-goers will tolerate only so much of the "legitimate drama," and the church-goers would stay at home even more than they do if the preachers should all and always be dramatic and emphatic and theatric. Where they are blunderers at it they amuse, where they are excellent at it they weary. Even Whitefield and Erskine, with all their skill, would weary out the audience if it were always the same audience.

It is the colloquial element that wears best, whether on the platform, in the pulpit, at the bar, or on the floor of a deliberative body.

To repeat, so as to prevent misconception or confusion : First, the self-excitation or physical earnestness of the actor is just as desirable and valuable to the speaker as it is to the actor ; second, the dramatic manner, which is inseparable from the drama, is a very useful auxiliary to public speaking ; but, third, when and by whom this dramatic manner is to be used is to be left to the judgment of the speaker ; and, fourth, that judgment may be trained to an indefinite extent.

## VII.

### THE RHETORIC FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING.

RHETORIC was at first composed and arranged for public speaking. That, indeed, is what the word means, and even so recent an authority as Webster gives as one of its definitions "the science of oratory." Plato, to quote him again, calls it "the art of ruling the minds of men." The modern speaker was the ancient rhetorician. The essay is a recent form of composition. The rhetoric for public speaking comprises all the forms into which language can be thrown—narrative, didactic, poetical, dramatic.

The rhetoric of the higher forms of oratory has a rhythm and cadence of its own. It is an oratorical undulation that comes in well with the oratorical temperament. The best speeches are only speeches, as the best essays are only essays. An essay may be declaimed, but public speaking could not long endure exclusively in the form of the essay or the narrative.

The Rhetoric  
of Public  
Speaking has  
a Cadence  
of its own.

Sheridan was offered a thousand pounds for a corrected copy of his great Begum speech, but had the wisdom to refuse, although Byron pronounced it the best oration ever delivered in England, and it received similar encomiums from Wilberforce, Fox, Burke, and Pitt. How many practised speakers would have been as wise! How many would know, and act upon the knowledge, that

the very extravagance of the approval was evidence that the speech was only a speech, and that its effects which drew the admiration came and went with the speech ! When the " public request " comes for the sermon to be printed, tell it to call again in six months and you will be ready for it, and you will never be troubled with it again. When the exhilaration produced by the sermon passes off the request for it at ten cents a copy subsides. Few sermons endure the types. Whitefield's are unendurable.

On the other hand, oratorical rhetoric of the highest order is imperishable, even in the case of such an orator as Burke, where the author of it failed in the delivery of it. The " dinner-bell " will always call to a glorious repast of what has been well called " Poetry and Philosophy in Oratoric Form." Macaulay gave us history, biography, and criticism in oratoric form, although he, too, failed in speaking the speech that came to him in oratoric form. Bolingbroke's orations, however, were both well composed and well delivered. They were prolonged flights of imaginative and impassioned diction, and their elocution was in keeping with it.

Gladstone's diction, too, is oratorical, which, as Macaulay says, " set off by the graces of utterance and gesture, vibrate on the ear." He is the public speaker in person, as well as in rhetoric. Fox's fist was in his diction as well as his gesture, and rightly so. He said " it was necessary to hammer it into them." And it was, for him. With his fist and his repetitions he was far more effective than he could have been in the harness of Bolingbroke or Chesterfield. He failed in elaborate and painstaking preparation. Froude's style and temperament are oratorical, and his rhetoric owes its fascination to that fact, Lecky to the contrary notwithstanding.



ing, who condemns it because it “quivers with passion” and is “as fierce as that of the most fiery debater in Parliament.” But there is no objection to it, seeing that it is the rhetoric of the most fiery debater out of Parliament, which he has a perfect right to be. Let the prophet speak as he is inspired to speak, and give us the words as they are given to him.

When Canning passed away a magazine writer exclaimed: “There died the last of the rhetoricians!” But since his death there have arisen a galaxy of rhetoricians that have done more to make the English language effective with a popular assembly and the great mass of all people than any of their predecessors. Science never had such a hearing, never, in fact, had any hearing worth speaking of in “oratoric form” before it found utterance in the rhetoric of Darwin, Tyndale, and Huxley. The diction of public speaking is the vehicle by which religion, philosophy, politics, and science reach mankind. Go ye into all the world and teach it, or rouse it, is a command impossible of obedience without the one supreme art of all arts—“the art of ruling the minds of men” by public speaking. It is the highest of the arts, and it will be the last to perish from the earth.

John Bright betrays a fastidiousness of rhetorical taste by not only the rarity of his addresses, but by the internal evidence of painstaking in their preparation. Daniel Webster showed the same consciousness and oratorical pains. It is curious to compare the report of his speech in reply to Hayne as it is declaimed in college and the original report, which has recently been made public. The euphonious peroration so familiar to us all can be seen here in the rough as it was delivered in the Senate.

“When my eyes shall be turned for the last time on

the meridian sun, I hope I may see him shining bright upon my united, free, and happy country. I hope I shall not live to see his beams falling upon the dispersed fragments of the structure of this once-glorious Union. I hope I may not see the flag of my country with its stars separated or obliterated ; torn by commotions ; smoking with the blood of civil war. I hope I may not see the standard raised of separate States' rights, star against star and stripe against stripe ; but that the flag of the Union may keep its stars and stripes corded and bound together in indissoluble ties. I hope I shall not see written as its motto, first liberty and then Union. I hope I shall see no such delusive and deluded motto on the flag of that country. I hope to see spread all over it, blazoned in letters of light and proudly floating over land and sea that other sentiment, dear to my heart, ' Union and liberty, now and forever, one and inseparable.' "

A speech or sermon or plea is like a large picture painted to be seen at a distance ; it will not bear and is not expected to endure microscopic criticism. It is to be heard in the mass and from afar. What would be considered blemishes upon close inspection are indispensable qualities when heard, as they are designed to be heard, at the right distance.

Rhetoric is not a science to be learned by committing to memory a lot of minute rules ; it is an art, and excellence in it is to be attained by the training of the rhetorical instinct—the rhetorical judgment, the sense of rhetoric, the ear for rhythm and euphony and idiom.

**Training of  
the Rhetorical  
Instinct.**

This is what needs stimulation and cultivation while the student is passing through his course of preparation for a public life which will depend for its success upon writing or public speaking. He is not to be handed a

book and required to burden his memory with several pages of its rules ; he should be handed a pen and required to create several paragraphs with the best rhetorical judgment he can bring into exercise, or he should be required to get on his legs and put into a speech the best language his ear for rhetorical propriety suggests.

Teacher and pupil work together on the pupils' rhetorical instinct. "Practice makes perfect," but perfection, or even progress, will come very slowly if the practice does not take hold of this sense of rhetoric or faculty for rhetoric. From the very start the ear, or sense, or faculty should be kept in lively operation. Every essay, speech, or sermon should be held rigidly accountable to this court of final appeal, from whose decisions there is no appeal. The question should be not so much, Why is this right ? but, Is it right ? The pupil must see and feel that it is right, instead of acquiescing mechanically in the opinion of the teacher or the law of the book upon the subject. The art of rhetoric is something drawn out from within, not something laid on from without. A science asks the reason why a thing is right ; an art asks only : Is it right ? In mathematics you can tell wherein you are right and wherein you are wrong. In rhetoric (as in painting) you cannot always and need not ever know why you are wrong or right, or partly wrong and partly right. You could not get on in geometry if you should depend exclusively upon your mathematical instinct ; on the contrary, the reason why pupils in the English language do not get on faster and farther is because they do not depend upon their rhetorical instinct, but content themselves with committing to memory a tangled jungle of "rules and exceptions," and then adding to them a mass of rhetorical "principles" and sub-principles.

When Haydn was criticised for modulations as contrary to the principles of music, he replied : " I have put that passage there because it does well." Said the critic : " It is contrary to the rules." Haydn rejoined : " But it is the pleasantest." Haydn's musical instinct was better than his critic's musical rules. It was an educated instinct and judgment, however.

" The men who cannot paint," said William Hunt, " are ready with admirable reasons for everything they have done ;" but when he was asked his reason for putting on a certain color, he replied : " I don't know ; I am just aiming at it." The artist in the colors of rhetoric does not paint according to rule, he aims.

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| <p><b>We Learn<br/>how to Use<br/>Language by<br/>Using it.</b></p> | <p>From the most rudimentary elements of grammar to the highest attainments in rhetoric the only rational and effective way to learn how to use language is to use it and use it, and continue to use it with the best rhetorical judgment you have in your possession.</p> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

As the child does not need to know why his sentence is ungrammatical, but simply needs to know and remember that it is ungrammatical, so the most accomplished rhetorician in the world needs nothing more to guide him than his educated sense of rhetorical propriety. The rules of rhetoric for the college student and the rule of grammar for the academy pupil are equally superfluous and embarrassing. As, for example :

Rule of grammar for the academy pupil : " If the subject of a sentence consists of two nouns or pronouns united by the conjunction ' and,' the verb must be put in the plural. As : John and James are in the field."

In the first place, how many boys and girls on the primary benches of the common school would say : " John and James is in the field" ? In the second

place, if one of them should say it, would it not be far more effective for the teacher or parent to "put the verb in the plural" for him then and there and thenceforth, than to require him to commit the rule to memory, leaving his practice of it to take care of itself? which is uniformly and universally done. The teacher crams the pupil with rules, and joins the pupil in disobeying them. This is easily explained. It is an easy problem in mental philosophy. Your habitual absorption in minute and elaborate rules renders you indifferent to their application. It is very doubtful whether teaching a thing is calculated to make us any the more disposed to practise it. Indeed, I should prefer to maintain the converse of the proposition. Perpetually dwelling on how or why a thing should be done may not only distract the attention from the doing of it, but may even disqualify us for doing it.

Rule of rhetoric for the college student: "The chief form of the synecdoche consists in naming a thing by some part of it, as: Fifty sail—they sought his blood."

In the first place, the phraseology of this rule or principle, like that of many another of its kind, is too abstruse to be intelligible without an example. This suggests, in the second place, the query whether the example would not be more effective without the rule than with it. It certainly would. In the third place, then, if the example does not commend itself without the principle, it will not because of the principle. In other words, all the pupil needs is the example. All he needs to know is that there is such a form of expression, and that he is free to appropriate or repudiate it as his rhetorical judgment shall dictate. Example acting upon the rhetorical instinct, the rhetorical instinct assimilating the example. The best book of examples for a

student in rhetoric is a book written by a good rhetorician. There is no better training for the rhetorical ear than the perpetual companionship of first-rate writers—not only correct or elegant writers, but contagious ones. Even the best of writers may be divided into contagious and non-contagious.

Is it likely that Mr. Froude or “George Eliot” would defend their use of the phrase, “they sought his blood,” on the ground that “the chief form of the synecdoche consists in naming a thing by some part of it”? Is it likely that they ever committed to memory any such rule, or if they did, is it likely they are indebted to it or any such for their proficiency in the use of the rhetorical judgment?

Suppose your attention should be called to your saying “was” when you should say “were” (a common error). Would you look up your grammar and commit to memory this rule: “When in a conditional clause it is intended to express doubt or denial, use the subjunctive mood”? Or, would you begin at once to substitute the right word for the wrong one?

It is only a degree more absurd to cram the infant at five years of age with the whys and wherefores of the corrections you urge upon his attention, than to bore the child at twelve years of age with the reason why the verb should be “put in the plural” or to burden the memory of the youth of nineteen years of age with awful principles about synecdoche or autonomasia.

The infant gradually corrects his syntax by following his rhetorical instinct under example and tuition. The child and the man should be kept to the same method. The ear for rhythm and idiom should be cultivated by practice under example, guidance, stimulation, and dis-



cipline, whether the pupil be five, ten, or twenty years of age.

The infant's use of language and sense of rhetorical propriety will be influenced by his examples and instructions. He will go up to the accuracy and elegance, or he will stay down with the rudeness and vulgarity by which he is surrounded. Just as his rhetorical instinct is bent, his rhetorical culture will be inclined. His method of advancement will be precisely the same after he has left the companions of his infancy as it was before. His attainments will depend upon, not the number of rules and exceptions he has stored in his head, but upon the amount and kind of cultivation his rhetorical instinct has received.

Just as the infant learns his mother tongue up to the time he is considered of proper age to be coached with "rules and exceptions," just so should he continue to learn his native language to the end of his days, whether he confines himself to the use of that language in conversation, or employs it in newspaper, book, speech, or sermon. And if he should try to make a living by making sentences, my word for it, he will find himself always learning and never able to compass the knowledge of his mother tongue, if his mother tongue is that of Chaucer and Goldsmith, Carlyle and Dickens, Fox and John Henry Newman.

A few of us, a very few of us, have this rhetorical instinct largely developed to begin with. With such it is an endowment of nature as rare as it is wonderful and valuable. The rest of us, the great majority of us, have this sense or faculty small to begin with, and are therefore dependent upon its stimulation and education.

Besides, these grammatical rules and rhetorical principles are changing; and usage has come to have as

much authority as grammar or lexicon. We are told that the above-quoted rule about the subjunctive mood is doomed, and I can furnish plenty of the best usage for the substitution of "was" for "were," "most" for "more," and for such words and phrases as "won't," "don't," "no one else's," and "never read anything else but their Bible," etc.

The perennial controversy over "the Queen's English" and "the Dean's English," and Mr. Washington Moon's English, and Mr. Grant White's English, and everybody's else English, indicates the chaotic state of things that has overtaken our unattainable mother tongue.

When you reflect upon the quarrel over the question whether we shall patronize the Latin or Saxon words of our language, and the quarrel over the question, How shall we spell these words after we have selected them ; and the quarrel over the question, How shall we pronounce them after we get them spelled ; and the quarrel over the question, How shall we arrange them in sentences after we get them selected, spelled, and pronounced ; and the quarrel over the question whether our essayists are to pattern after Carlyle or Addison ; or our poets after Tennyson or Browning ; or our orators after Castelar or Wendell Phillips ; or our preachers after Robertson or Whitefield—I say, when you take all these quarrels into consideration, I am sure you will thank us sensible fellows among your educators for knocking the chains of Lindley Murray and Whately from your minds, and telling you to go forth free to indulge or to discipline, to neglect or to cultivate your rhetorical instinct as you shall see fit, we never ceasing to admonish you, however, that whatsoever you sow in the way of rhetorical judgment, that shall you reap in the way of rhetorical acquisition.

In this rhetorical training you are to have an eye upon the rhetorical deficiencies of your audience, but you are not to allow your audience to dictate your rhetoric.

**The Audience is not to be the only Judge of the Speaker's Rhetoric.**

The late Dr. Guthrie says he "drew his pen through every passage, even those he thought best, which it required an extraordinary effort to commit to memory, reasoning thus : If it does not make such an impression on my mind as to be remembered without much difficulty, how is it to impress others ?" This reasoning is against, not so much the passage, as the memoriter method of utilizing it. Its acceptance is made to turn upon (1) its adaptation to being committed to memory, (2) the impression it made upon the mind as well as memory of its author, and (3) his judging of its fitness from his memory to that of the audience.

The same admirable public speaker tells us that he "catechised a class of young persons on his sermon" with this result : He "got a good account of introduction and first head, meagre one of the second head ; the third was an utter blank ; while the peroration, when it was thought attention was blunted and patience exhausted, appeared to have impressed itself on their minds like a seal on wax." So he endeavored to (1) avoid the faults of the ill-remembered parts, and (2) to cultivate the style of those passages which had engaged the attention and touched the feelings of his hearers.

Is not the peroration designed to "sharpen blunted attention and revive exhausted patience" ? But does that prove that the perorative "style" should be cultivated exclusively, or that the heads not remembered by one class of hearers should be cut off, or that heads which none remember should be avoided ? Some lost

the introduction and three heads, and remembered only the concluding portion. Therefore let us have nothing but the concluding portion. But may not their recollection of the concluding portion have been dependent upon the portion that preceded it? Some parts are remembered by certain persons, therefore let us have none but those parts for all! That reduces the duty of the audience to an exercise like that of a class in the recitation-room—an exercise of memory. Some parts do not touch the feelings, therefore let us have no parts but those which do touch the feelings. Has the public speaker, or even the preacher, nothing to do but touch the feelings?

Archbishop Tillotson, we are told by our setters of the preachers to rights, was in the habit of “rehearsing his sermons to an illiterate old woman of plain sense, and of bringing down his rhetoric to her level.” Archbishop Tillotson was not quite right, even if his congregation was made up exclusively of illiterate old women, for it is the business of an archbishop and the bishops and other clergy to level up the illiterate old women, and not allow themselves to be levelled down by illiterate old women, and become learned old women, as, indeed, they are if they are forever being brought down by their audience instead of bringing up their audience to their level.

Bishop Latimer, too, boasted that he “repeated himself to annoy the learned in his congregation, and that he sought more the profit of those which be ignorant than to please the learned men.” But are not learned men worth pleasing and converting? Does not fishing for men include angling for learned men?

Martin Luther falls into the same fallacy. “When I preach,” he says, “I sink myself deeply down; I regard neither doctors nor masters, of whom there

are in the church above forty ; but I have an eye to the multitude of young people, children, and servants, of whom there are more than two thousand."

If the servants and children make the most of the audience, they should have the special attention of the speaker ; but why not regard the forty doctors and masters present ? Does the great commission enjoin disregard of doctors, especially when so many doctors of divinity need it as a remedy for themselves as well as for their hearers ?

Cardinal Wiseman, on the other hand, was true to his name in giving to his hearers each his portion in due season, and with due seasoning. " Naturally florid and ornate, he could come down from his sweeping flights to trudging matter-of-fact in the presence of an audience that will tolerate nothing else." But whether the speaker is compelled to come down by the audience, as Dr. Wiseman was, or sinks himself down of his own accord in disregard of the impenitent doctors, as Dr. Martin Luther did, or comes down to the ignorant in order to annoy the learned, as Bishop Latimer did, or levels himself down for the exclusive benefit of the illiterate old women of the audience, as Archbishop Tillotson did, he comes far short of that breadth of training in the use of the will, and the judgment which is indispensable to the first order of excellence in the art of public speaking. He is not making the most of himself ; he is deficient in tact ; he does not know what he is about. He is a speaker whose rhetorical tact and judgment are wretchedly out of repair, although it is quite possible for him to be thoroughly conversant with all the rules of English grammar and sacred syntax and elocutionary gymnastics. Such an error is one of judgment, and can only be corrected by correcting the judgment.

The speaker's vocabulary is another attainment that comes to him by way of the rhetorical judgment, tact, and ear, and the use of the will. It is not to be acquired by rote or rule, but by training. Fox said: "I never want a word, but Pitt never wants the word." Pitt's vocabulary was acquired. So is that of John Bright. He has always been a student of vocabulary. Gladstone says: "Constant and searching reflection on the subject will naturally clothe itself in words, and of the phrases it supplies many will rise spontaneously to the lips." Yes, especially if the lips should happen to be those of Mr. Gladstone. He has a genius for words. They are sometimes a snare to him, but the majority of us are not so ensnared or inspired. What comes to him by nature we must acquire by study, by the use of the ear that trieth words, by knowing what we and our words are about.

Here again we are met by our arbitrary teachers, who, not content with dictating our gestures and emphasis, insist upon specifying the words that we are to use and the words that we are to avoid. They must be small words, or words of at most a couple of syllables, and they must be words with which everybody is familiar, and they must be words of Saxon origin.

A learned and dull preacher of the English Church said recently in a public address: "Great effects are not now produced by great words. We have been a literary people long enough to have used up most of our big phrases. If any rhetoric wants teaching to those who are to lead others, it is the rhetoric of simplicity; the art of expressing earnest thoughts in plain words. Not the outer sparkle, but the inner heat, kindles the sympathy of modern hearers. It is true, the day of flocking



after great orators is not gone by ; but the day of seeing through them is come."

There is only one way of accounting for this contemptuous reference to the dramatic and rhetorical element in public speaking on the part of a public speaker who lived in the country and age of Whitefield, Irving, Chalmers, Peel, Brougham, O'Connell, Erskine, Shiel, Fox, Pitt, Scarlett, and Gladstone. The learned dean was utterly deficient in comprehension or appreciation of the art of public speaking, and would reduce all other speakers to the drowsy cadences and monotonous intone with which he practised what he calls "the art of expressing earnest thoughts in plain words." The day of flocking after commonplace preachers has not gone by, but the day of seeing through their sour grapes has come.

We thirty millions in the United Kingdom, and we fifty millions in the United States, will be much more of a "literary people" than we are before we can dispense with big phrases, just as we shall have to be much more of an artistic people than we are before we deny ourselves chromos or despise our engravings, as we are taught to do by Mr. Seymour Haden. To make the matter still more discouraging, some of our literary people prefer John Gilpin to John Milton, and even look upon "Paradise Lost" as a mass of "big phrases" to be exchanged for the plain words of Jane Austen, which Lord Macaulay, one of the "literary people" of some note, preferred to even his own "great words" and "outer sparkle."

The public speaker must use only words of Saxon origin, according to those who in all probability have never yet paused long enough in their private conversation to find out whether their vocabulary is of Saxon or

Sioux origin. Nor is it of any more consequence to him than it is to them whether his words came from the North Pole or South Africa. What we said about the voice we say about the vocabulary: its origin, its history, and its constituent parts are all equally immaterial to the public speaker, however interesting they may be to the philologist.

Whately indorses what he calls the obvious rule laid down by Aristotle, to avoid uncommon and hard words, and prefers terms of Saxon origin because they will be more familiar to the hearers than those of Latin origin.

In the first place, uncommon words are educational, and the speaker is an educator, a leveller up; in the second place, the Latin word might be more intelligible than the Saxon word; in the third place, any speaker who stops to study the history of his words will never have words enough or bread enough in his mouth to save him from starvation.

Of what possible use is it to the speaker to know when he uses the word *thunder* that it has the same origin as the Latin *tonitu*, and that the root is *tan*, to stretch; and that in Sanscrit the sound *thunder* is expressed by the same root, *tan*? If his speech is improved by *thunder*, the word should be found in his speech, although his using that particular word is a reproof of those who see no use for any but the Saxon words of the English tongue, which contains deposits from every tongue. Max Müller says: "Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Celtic, Saxon, Danish, French, Spanish, Italian, German, Hindustani, Malay, and Chinese words lie mixed in the English dictionary." In this cauldron the public speaker is to find, and out of it to select and appropriate, his vocabulary, and with exclusive reference to its suitability and effectiveness.

The absurdity of this Saxon partiality is all the more apparent when you reflect upon the changes that have taken place in the so-called Anglo-Saxon tongue. Max Müller says : " The language of Alfred is so different from the English of the present day that we have to study it in the same manner as we study Greek and Latin ! " And yet it must not be studied so as to get any " discipline " out of it, because it is not one of the " dead languages. " Why not get discipline and information at one and the same time by one and the same study ? When the English language becomes a dead language it will be treated with the respect which it now deserves as a live language.

In a word, the English has come to be distinctly and separately a language of itself, and may be called Anglo-Italian, or, for that matter, Anglo-Hindustani, if you prefer calling it after the names of all its " dead " relatives to calling it by its rightful and Christian name. As we are a nation of foreigners, our tongue is a native language of foreign birth.

Etymology is of no more use to the public speaker than entomology. In fact, it is as embarrassing to be paddling among the roots of your words as it is to be peering into a diagram to learn the uses of your diaphragm. Etymology is just as useless to the speaker as philology. The clamor for Saxon words is no more rational than would be the demand that all words should be used with their first signification, Christian, for example, and snob and radical and libel and officious.

It is of far more importance that you should speak correctly the words that now constitute the English language, whatever be their origin or etymology, than that you should show partiality for Saxon or Latin words. In fact, it is of no consequence where the words pretty,

across, window, method, here, getting, coming, and for, originated, but it is very important that you should not say pooty, acrost, winder, methid, yere, gettin', comin', and fur.

Do not feel under obligation to read Homer because Bossuet and Curran did and Gladstone does, or Milton because Pitt did and John Bright does, or Dante because Robert Hall and Brougham did, or Burke because Macaulay did, or Demosthenes because Burke did, or Euripides because Fox did, or Barrow because Chatham did, or Chrysostom because Barrow did. Such an affectation is not only ridiculous, but hindering. You may be throwing away your time as some of these great speakers may have done, for it does not follow that their speaking was as much affected by their reading as they supposed. Because a man is fond of reading Homer or Milton does not prove that they influence his rhetoric. In fact, an affectation of a partiality for Milton, and of indifference for Goldsmith, is not unknown among men of some renown. However, be this as it may, and be your rhetorical likings what they may, keep company with good English, the best modern English, the best modern oratorical English. You are living in an age glorious for good English. Keep your eye upon its form, your ear upon its rhythm and cadence ; keep your sense of rhetoric sensitive to its quips and sentences and bullets of the brain. Think in good English, talk with as copious and varied a vocabulary as you can command, keep the door of your lips as sternly against the vulgar and ill-considered word as you do or should do against the intoxicating liquor or the indigestible food.

Somebody, or a hearer of sermons who evidently thinks he is somebody in the matter of criticising preachers, says in the columns of the *Spectator* :

“A few Sundays ago I was coming out of a church, where I had heard a distinguished ecclesiastic of the day, and overtook an acquaintance who had been similarly occupied. ‘A wonderfully fine sermon!’ remarked my friend. ‘Well,’ I ventured to reply, ‘individual sentences had a good *ring*; but I confess when he arrived at the end, I had not the least idea what the whole sermon was about.’ ‘Oh, yes!’ replied my friend, ‘*I did notice that.*’ Now, sir, in the name of all that’s wonderful, what meaning did he attach to the word ‘fine,’ and what had been the real cause of his enthusiasm?”

**Be Thankful for  
a Few Individ-  
ual Sentences  
with a Good  
Ring.**

The distinguished ecclesiastic might retort that he had not the least idea what the whole criticism was about, and he doubted if his critic had. Was not his acquaintance as well warranted in calling the sermon a fine one by reason of its individual sentences with their good ring, as he was in sneering at it for want of what I presume he has in mind, that everlasting “unity of discourse,” and the like, which the books on Sacred Syntax and Holy Hermeneutics insist upon? He would have thought and logic and unity for fifty-two Sundays of the year, and two of such sermons every Sunday, for he goes on to complain that the church-goer “does not like to be called upon to think” (in church), but prefers “a warm, equable trickle of religious prose-poetry, which he finds partly a stimulant and partly a sedative.” This setter of the preachers to rights would have a sermon all stimulant, every sentence with a good ring, and the whole a repast equal to the requirements of his intellectual digestion. But suppose his was the only such digestive apparatus in the audience of the distinguished ecclesiastic. Should the rest of the sheep be starved



that this high-toned ram may be stuffed? For my part, I suspect that there were quite enough of ringing, fine sentences in that sermon to justify its designation as a "wonderfully fine sermon," and that it was not altogether the fault of the sermon that its critic "had not the least idea of what the whole sermon was about." When he does not see the point, is it necessarily the fault of the point? Is it indispensable to the success of the sermon that the hearer should know what the whole of it is about? May it not be enough for him to know and feel and realize what a part of it is about—a ringing, stinging, individual sentence of it, for example? Many such an arrow has gone home while every other missed of their mark, and may have gone home to some other. As a matter of fact, the most effective preaching is most effective with these arrows, whether stimulant or sedative, or both combined, and many a time the bow is drawn at a venture, and many a preacher has acknowledged it.

There are questions of tact in public speaking which can be settled only by the attainment of what may be called rhetorical tact.

**Questions to be Settled by Rhetorical Tact.**

For example, it is unwise to weary the imagination of the hearer, because you are sure by that means to weary his muscles and sinews. It will weary his imagination to be told at the start what you propose to accomplish before you stop. It will weary him to tell him that after you have done so and so you will do so and so, and then so and so, and finally and in conclusion, so and so. Go on and do it. Say your say and be done with it. Never say: Before I pass to the preliminary remarks, by way of preface to the introduction to the first head of my sixteen heads, I wish to remark, in the first place, that—but, by the way, before I pass to that, I wish to say that, etc.



We are told that the late Moses Stuart preached a sermon in which he (1) "occupied a large part of an hour telling his audience what he was not going to preach about, of errors he was not going to combat, giving (2) a sketch of the heresies alluded to, (3) a few strokes designed to show how easily they could be demolished if he should take the time, and (4) the real instruction for unlearned hearers who cared nothing for exploded theories was summed up in a few paragraphs." And yet the unlearned hearers were a majority of the congregation !

An astute and penetrating auditor of Dr. Liddon says of his preaching :

"As we follow him from sermon to sermon, it is not difficult to detect the various intellectual tendencies of his sermons—to see at one point how he is combating some of the opinions of Mr. Mill, and at another how he has risen fresh from the perusal of the writings of Mr. Lecky ; how, again, he is combating the English forms into which the French system of Comte has thrown itself, and how, again, he is meeting the latest German rationalists before their newest errors have become naturalized in England ; once more, how he is crystallizing vague, floating thought and difficulties on sacred subjects, or combating the full tide of secular opinion as found in such periodicals as the *Pall Mall Gazette* or the *Saturday Review*."

Here is an opportunity for the speaker's rhetorical judgment and tact. Is this adroit or maladroit ? That depends upon the character of the audience. If Dr. Liddon's hearers, or the most of them, knew what he was driving at as well as this one of them did, he may have been justified in this covert method of conducting a controversy, but I doubt it. If, however, very few of his

audience could follow his "vague, floating thought," his time and theirs was lost, miserably lost.

Look out for vagueness under the guise of culture. Be not too thin. There is one element inseparable from the rhetoric of public speaking, and that is the cartilaginous element, physical earnestness in the diction. This animal force of which Carlyle was so enamored and of which he was so powerful a champion, compounded of iron and muscle, of the brain of the gods and the brawn of the brutes, always sits before you when you stand before an audience. Master it or it will master you. It is to be taken account of when you make rhetoric for it. The Apostle Paul made much of it. He taught the gentlest of all religions by means of metaphors drawn from the wrestlers, the racers, and the warriors. A veteran banker, who has been surrounded from birth with affluence and elegance, said to me: "I like my preacher to hit me a whack and knock me headlong occasionally."

Rhetorically speaking he meant, of course, for it would hardly have done for his parson to try it literally. The preacher makes a mistake damaging to not only his style of speaking, but his auditors' style of hearing, if he supposes that a city congregation parted with their brutality when they took leave of their poverty, and hired a furniture dealer to furnish them with taste. Scratch any rich man and you will come to the poor one. The new veneer is thin, the old character is thick.

The setters of the public speakers to rights have been agitated by a large number of questions which are to be settled by the trained will, judgment, tact, taste, of the speaker, such as whether he shall read a manuscript in part or in full, or speak from notes, or write in full and commit, or write in part and commit, or think out and

commit the thoughts, or think out a few heads and leave the remainder to be thought out in public.

Sydney Smith said : " Reading sermons is a practice that stifles every germ of eloquence." Then reading sermons is a blessing, for it stifles many a germ of eloquence that ought to be stifled just as the germs of malaria ought to be stifled. But it did not stifle the germs of Chalmers's eloquence or Dean Stanley's, although he, like many another reader, did his best to stifle an eloquent rhetoric with the approved Anglican intonation. Nevertheless, the brilliant dean did quite right in reading his sermons. His germ of eloquence would certainly have been stifled by an imitation of Sydney Smith's extempore " practice."

I would not begin here by laying on a rule from without, but by training the judgment, tact, and taste from within. I would have the will set in motion. I would have the man know what he and his sermon or lecture are about, and I would have him seek to make the most of himself ; and if then he does not know by what method it is best for him to address an audience, I would advise him to go to hedging, ditching, or insurance, any honest calling, no matter what, and quit public speaking forever.

## VIII.

### A TALK ABOUT AUDIENCES.

THE audience is an enormous factor in the speaker's calculations. An eye for his audience and quickness in reading it is another attainment of inestimable value, and one that is susceptible of indefinite cultivation.

There are audiences and audiences. I have met them face to face and had all sorts of experiences with them, good, bad, and worse, from New York to San Francisco, from Land's End to John O'Groat's, from Cork to the Causeway. Let us have a talk about them.

All foreign audiences are far more demonstrative than ours, and take far more liberties with the speaker.

American and  
Foreign Audi-  
ences Com-  
pared.

Even the regulation "applause," or clapping the hands, is by no means frequent in this country out of the large cities or a political mass-meeting, where we applaud, not so much our speaker as our side.

In fact, it is very common for the lecturer to appear and disappear in the Great Republic without so much as a wink to cheer his despairing sense of oratorical collapse. I remember hearing the late M. Thiers, who was a very sensitive as well as vigorous orator, when it was truly said of him that he "became a little confused in his sentences because he was expecting applause which did not come." The French speaker misses it because the French audience is so given to it. Themistocles exclaimed, upon receiving the plaudits at the Olympic

festival, "This is the happiest moment I have ever known ! I now have the full reward of all my labors." The American lecturer would give half his fee for that same reward. The unhappiest moments of his life are spent in trying to earn the plaudits that never come. I have known him to stop and call the manager to him in the midst of the awful silence and whisper, What is the matter ? Are they mad at me ? An English audience divides its expressions of approbation between "Hear—hear," clapping of hands, and cheers ; and its disapprobation is expressed, according to its kind and degree, by "Oh—oh !" which means I doubt it, or Ought you to say it ; by "Time—time," which means that the speaker is taking more than his share of the oratorical proceedings ; by ironical stamping, which means, We are tired of you, quit ; by hisses or "Shame—shame," which is the greeting given to anything specially outrageous, as quoted by the speaker from an opponent, for example ; by "Louder—louder," which is no more prevalent than it is deserved ; by "Chair—chair," which indicates that the presiding officer is on his legs, and the debater must get off of his ; by "Question—question," which reminds the debater that he has wandered from the matter in dispute ; and by "Order—order," which is intended to silence unparliamentary language. Several of these, of course, will only be heard in a deliberative body.

It is singular that, with all our imitations of the English, their "hear—hear" has never been adopted. It is a great convenience to both speaker and hearer. It is a go-between in the way of applause, and admirably fills the often necessarily chilling and protracted gap between utter silence and rousing acclamations. Then this freedom of speech in the treatment of the speaker is of great

advantage to him. It keeps his mind upon the "question," his eye upon the audience, and his glance upon the clock. It is an excellent training for him to be reminded, by the tap of the impatient heel, that audiences have rights which orators are bound to respect. And as often as I have heard this liberty of lip and limb exercised, I have never seen it abused. In the House of Commons and in Exeter Hall it is used with remarkable discrimination.

Miss Thursby deplores the undemonstrative behavior of the American audience, and says in other countries "the feelings find quick expression," much to "the encouragement of the performer." Kean had the same experience in this country, and told his manager he "could not go on the stage again if the men kept their hands in their pockets. Such an audience would extinguish Etna."

All American speakers and actors who have had experience abroad join in Miss Thursby's lamentation, but her explanation is inadequate.

Applause and hisses, hear—hear, and oh—oh, are conventionalities in England. Everything is conventional and traditional in England—the cheers of the commons, the obeisances at court, and the rowdyism of the students at the installation of lord rector. John Bull, whether a pig at the trough, a spaniel crouching at the feet of a lord, or a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour in Africa or India, is an animal governed by etiquette and traditions; but when he applauds a fellow it makes a fellow feel very much obliged to him, whether the applause comes of etiquette or enthusiasm. Even hissing has its advantages. It emboldens the speaker, who might otherwise leave his will unworked and let his fires go out.



I was hissed by a Scotch audience for announcing a different lecture from the one advertised. I was quite right in supposing that the lecture I brought would interest them more than the one they expected, but I was maladroit in making the change. I was experienced enough to know that an audience is as testy as an individual. A change of subject cuts off their ears. Always stick to the advertised topic. Never rub the face of an audience the wrong way, unless indeed you have a case to argue with it, or an appeal to make for an unpopular cause.

I was hissed again in Scotland—this time in Edinburgh—by the students of the University at the lecture before the Philosophical Institution. In view of a certain discussion which was then and there agitating the educational world, I took pains to say that in America, if a woman passed the examination, she was given the degree or admitted to the class. The undergraduates hissed, and I hissed back at them the obnoxious sentiment, and the rest of the audience came to my support with a hurricane of claps, stamps, and hear—hears. What shall a man do under such circumstances? He has nothing to do but keep cool and look cool. What shall he say? Why, “if any of the audience hiss,” under such circumstances “you may cry, Now, Hercules, thou crushest the snake.” But it would not have been adroit to say that to the audience that was simply teased by my bringing them a lecture that they had not bargained for. An American audience would, in both these cases, have been less demonstrative, but just as resentful. The disappointed would have been sullen, the opponents of the women would have sulked or possibly left the house with creaky boots.

I have known this to be done to me for appearing in the place of another lecturer. In spite of the apologies of the manager, who said the promised orator was dead, or something or other equally conclusive, I forget now what, and in spite of my own conciliatory grins, there was no oh—oh or hisses as in Great Britain, but a movement and a getting up and going out with new boots on, as in America. Finally, an offensive partisan of the dead and gone lecturer, who was just sufficiently inebriated to know what he was about, arose and opened an argument with the chair, who answered him by ordering in the police, who carried him bodily from the hall. I felt by that time as if the hall were taking itself bodily from under me, and that I had nothing left now to stand upon but my dignity, and I could plainly feel that give way under me, although I did not betray that feeling to the audience. I waited for the intoxication of the enemy over his temporary success to subside, gathered my scattered forces in the way of faculties and audience, and—went on with the lecture to its peroration, which I cast aside for one that I recalled of a far more victorious ring, and retired amid a burst of applause, and won the headline of “a plucky lecturer” in the morning paper. The speaker at bay before an audience should never show the white feather, though it may be impossible for him to avoid a white feeling. A bold front may win his enemy; a back down will lose his friends.

One more, while I am in the mood for reminiscences. This is a case where I had to handle an audience that I was not allowed to see. An esteemed contemporary in the lecture field was suddenly bereft of his voice by a cold, and implored me to take his place in a neighboring town. It was only ten hours before the lecture. I hesitated, and expressed my awful dread; but there was

my professional duty, to say nothing of my obliging disposition, and there was my friend imploring me with wheezing despair to take the letter of introduction and go. I took the letter of introduction and went. It was a gushing letter that my friend insisted upon sending. It even asserted that I could beat him lecturing hollow, and there were few lecturers, etc., etc. But all to no purpose with the lecture manager at Blankville. He read it under the kerosene flame of the depot, and remarked, "It will not do, sir!" We parted, he for the audience and I for the hotel. The lecture which I was not allowed to deliver was to be delivered in an hour. Should I go to the church and insist upon a hearing, seeing that the man who had thus suddenly become my antagonist held the fort and the surrounding territory, and that I held nothing but my carpet-bag and the lecture in it, and knew nobody, not a soul. No, that would be bad tactics. I knew a better tactic than that. I knew newspapering. I would newspaper him. I found a newspaper just going to press with its usual lack of a sensation.

"Editor, I suppose?"

"Yes, and you?"

"Lecturer, I suppose. Will you insert a card?"

"Well—yes—I—I—suppose so. Why, what is the nature of it?"

I wrote the facts as I have herein narrated them. Came with letter from So-and-so to So-and-so, who said it would not answer, sir. Signed my entire name. Editor's eye twinkled. Said that was all right, and added, By Jove! or something that sounded like that, and asked lots of questions. Seemed to enjoy the whole affair much more than I did. Well, thought I, he is no brother-in-law of the enemy, that's evident. I went home, the

card came out, the town buzzed, the enemy was (so I was told) dumbfounded. He was importuned to say his say in another card, and he said he would, or perish in the attempt ; but he never did. I received an invitation to lecture on such date as would suit my convenience, signed by a long list of good and foremost citizens. I selected a date, was met by a band of music, escorted to the hall, which was jammed, and when I had struggled my way to the platform I had an uproarious welcome. Delivered the lecture, never alluded to the enemy, and we have never alluded to one another since ; and that was my experience in that town.

Another time my trunk was detained, and I was obliged to lecture in borrowed plumage and stand in another man's boots in a very literal sense. I must have looked as I felt, for the reporter said, "He looked as solemn as if he had just come up out of the grave." If he had said mean instead of solemn, he would come nearer to my feelings.

Another time I dropped my notes at the door of the hall in the dark, and when they were recovered only a part of them were discovered, and they were tail end foremost and inside out.

Once in Glasgow it was my ill-fortune to be the last on a long list of speakers at a large public meeting. Hours passed and speakers spoke until it seemed to me that it would be wise in me to beg off for both my own sake and for the sake of the audience. I sent a note to the chairman to that effect, and he (William Graham, M.P.) replied in pencil as follows : "My impression is that the whole audience, or very nearly so, will remain for your address, and we should greatly regret its omission. Scotch audiences can take a great deal of matter.—W. G." I was left to my own judgment and—vanity. I spoke,

but my judgment had enough control over my vanity to make me brief. The weary audience applauded my consideration for them.

These experiences will serve to show what a training you who are going to be public speakers need in the use of the will, in self-reliance and self-possession, in general ship, in tact, in knowing what you are about.

Audiences in Great Britain give a better average attention than those of ours, but ours are superior in exceptional attention. Ours are quicker and more responsive toward what they regard as clever or a "good thing;" theirs are better for the dead level of public listening. In the old country there is a more uniform and decorous, in ours a more inconstant and animated attention. There you are always sure, in the first place, of an audience, and, in the second place, of attention. Whether lively or dull, attention nevertheless it is. You have their eyes, which are not so easy to gather and hold in our country. You have not the constant dread there of losing your hold, which dread and apprehension saps your composure in the land of free eyes and stiff knees. The audience helps you, because they feel under obligation to the occasion as well as to you. It is their opportunity as well as yours. They share the place and time and object with you. They may not be deeply interested, and it may be impossible to rouse them deeply, but they will look at you, and sit still, and greet you and your points with the conventional applause. You have no concern about their corporeal fair play, to say the least; that they count due to civility, to decorum, to themselves if not to you, and that answers your purpose.

Theirs for Average,  
Ours for Exceptional  
Attention.

Their lecture audiences are perceptibly below ours in intelligence, but excel ours in that decorous long-suffering which is so valuable to the speaker, whether preacher or lecturer.

Audiences in England outside of the Established Church are weeded. To an American lecturer or preacher they have a picked-over appearance. The church takes the cream, the chapel the milk of society. Carriages at the chapel door are stared at. "Carriage people" is an English phrase, and such people are a sort of caste dependent upon, not their ancestry, but their wheels for their elevation. The shopkeeper holds them in reverence, the chapel-keeper drops his head as they pass. A deacon, speaking of a lady that he wished me to meet, took pains to repeat that she is a "carriage lady." She absolutely rides in a one-horse carriage to a Congregational chapel!

We recall Pepys's diary, in which he records how he "went abroad with his wife the first time he ever rode in a coach," and how he "prayed God to bless and continue to him" this inestimable English boon and boom. It is noteworthy, too, that Pepys ordered his coachman, on the first Sunday of the coach's existence, to drop him at the door of the church instead of at the door of the chapel, where he had been accustomed to worship God on foot. Nor can we overlook so recent an incident of a similar nature to be found in the diary of the late Lord Macaulay, who has transmitted it thus: "January 16th, 1851.—At half-past seven the brougham came, and I went in it to dine at Lord John Russell's, pleased and proud. This is the first time I ever had a carriage of my own, except when in office."

The popular audience in England begins with the



middle of the middle class, and goes on down to the upper working class. The nobility of England would rather shoot pigeons than hear Huxley. It would be impossible to parallel Mr. Spurgeon's congregation in the United States, except so far as the United States fill his pews. There is no such unmixed classification outside of a very few churches in a very few great cities, and they are called "mission churches."

But if this is a bad side of a class form of society (and upon that question we say nothing), there is what everybody will admit is a good side to it. It creates a conventional decorum and reverence that are difficult to secure without it, and that tell strongly and helpfully for the public speaker.

It is not difficult to see from this social situation, with its evils and blessings, why audiences are more easily obtained and more easily held, when obtained, in England than in this country. Put together the lower average of intelligence and the higher average of reverence, and you have the solution. The standard of preaching and all other public speaking is lower, and the standard of hearing higher. There is more regard for the forms of worship and all other public forms, as there is for the formalities and civilities of social life, and less of querulous and restless impatience with public servants, whether in the pulpit, on the stump, in the lecture-room, or on "the government bench." An omnibus-driver said to me: "Fact is, none of us drivers need be afraid of losing our places, if we only keep sober and use our horses well." He had been on the box thirteen years; others I know have been there for twenty years. It is just as easy for the lecturer, or professor, or preacher to stay thirteen or twenty years. They need not be afraid of losing their places if they keep sober and know

how to hold their horses and their tongues ; and that is to be done only by the exercise of the will.

The pre-eminent preacher, who reigns over his Board of Wearers and Tearers by sheer popularity with the pews, is just as much respected here as he is there, but the great mass of undistinguished usefulness has a foothold there that it has not attained in our country. Mediocrity draws as large a congregation there as superiority with us, while men who have extraordinary congregations there would never rise to the first place in America. Criticism of sermons, as compared with our attainments in that department of human progress, is at a very low ebb, a very low ebb indeed.

Make a study of audiences. It is quite the fashion, to observe, to suppose, or at least to insinuate, that lawyers,

**Reading the  
Human Nature  
of Audiences.**

are the only public speakers who should make a laborious and constant study of human nature as it appears in audiences. This is preposterous. There is no public speaker whose success does not depend upon his knowledge of the human countenance and the human disposition, and his ability to read the latter by means of the former. Juries may not be, technically speaking, audiences, but audiences are invariably juries. They are to be confirmed in their opinions, if not converted to new ones, or, if they are simply to be informed or entertained, they must be conciliated, for if they are not conciliated they are alienated. They are very apt to take either one of these attitudes toward the speaker.

Whether the lecturer teaches or simply amuses, he must look upon his audience as a jury to be carried and held, while a preacher who loses sight of this fact is sure to be lost sight of by his congregation.

In fact, the traits, not to say tricks, that are so warmly

commended in a successful attorney are precisely those which inhere in all public speaking. One of Lord Abinger's methods with a jury, it is said, "consisted in closely scrutinizing the faces of the twelve men in the jury-box. If discovering, as could often be done, that some one of them was distinctly superior to the rest in intelligence and other qualities which influence common men, to this person, when addressing the jury, he especially directed his eye and speech, winning the goodwill of the flattered jurymen, and through him the verdict sought for."

The same closeness of scrutiny of the faces of the one hundred or one thousand in the audience box will yield the same result, and a similar method with the "superior" faces in a public congregation will produce a precisely similar result. The Duke of Wellington said: "When Scarlett is addressing a jury there are thirteen jurymen." When any speaker is addressing any audience of a hundred and seventy-two, there ought to be a hundred and seventy-three auditors. There is nothing in Scarlett's method with a jury, when the other side had a strong case, that does not apply with equal force in the discussion of any public question that divides public opinion where your opponent has the advantage of you in a matter of fact or of theory. "I avoided all appearance of confidence, and endeavored to place the reasoning on my part in the clearest and strongest view, and to weaken that of my adversary; to show that the facts for the plaintiff would lead naturally but to one conclusion, while those of the defendant might be accounted for on other hypotheses; and when I thought I had gained my point, I left it to the candor and good sense of the jury to draw their own conclusion. This course seems to me not to be the result of any consum-

mate art, but the plain and natural course which good sense would dictate."

What is here called good sense is only another name for the good judgment, tact, rhetorical adroitness, personal address which I have insisted upon, but which is, as a rule, the result of consummate art, and certainly was the result of consummate art in the case of Lord Abinger. It is a "consummate art" to "avoid all appearance of confidence" before a jury or an audience. It is the art of being natural. It is the common-sense that comes of uncommon training. "Scrutiny of faces" is susceptible of indefinite improvement. It requires experience and consciousness, and knowing what you are about, and the use of the will. It is impossible to those who forget themselves and think only of their subject, or to those who expect to acquire the art of reading human nature in human faces by acquiring the emphasis of Marc Antony's oration over the royal corpse of Julius Cæsar.

This observation and study of audiences is all the more necessary for the speaker because of the difficulty he has in discerning the opinion of his audience with reference to himself.

The speaker must learn to read faces in an audience for the very good reason that that is about his only opportunity for knowing what his audience thinks of him and his method. A preacher may spend a lifetime with the same congregation in utter ignorance of exactly what they think of his discourses. They will not speak, and he dare not ask; nor is the newspaper report to be depended upon. It is never written by an audience. It is written sometimes by indifference, sometimes by malice, and sometimes by gush. "The other side" can see nothing in it, our side sees in it "the greatest effort

of his life," and the considerate pew-holder tells his parson to his face that the "supply" preached "the greatest sermon he had ever heard." Sometimes one's miserable failure appears in the paper, under the manipulation of a judicious friend, as a rare triumph of eloquence, while few sermons or lectures escape, in the atmosphere of self-interest or the town interest, from being "masterly," or the "ablest" thing of the kind ever known in that community. On the other hand, there are exceptions, very marked exceptions, when the report is prepared by absent indifference, or stupidity that was present, or malice that might have been either absent or present. You had one of those rare seasons of exaltation and exultation which occasionally come to the public speaker who works hard at his art, and strives to excel in it. You were carried out of yourself, and carried your audience out of themselves, and when you all got back to yourselves, and congratulated yourselves on your paroxysm of ecstasy, you had a glass of very cold water thrown in your faces in the shape of the little reporter's little report. The little reporter said in his little report that you delivered rather an interesting discourse on the whole, and it seemed, so far as he could learn, that it gave general satisfaction to a large extent. Whew! The consequence is that the hearer's opinion will be modified by the little reporter's report. He will say: Why, was that the sermon I was so excited over? I was evidently mistaken.

You see, then, how necessary it is that the speaker should train himself to judge for himself as to how he is getting on with his audience. By this means he will learn, too, how long he is to speak, and with what method of discourse—another way of both training and using the judgment and tact so essential in the art of public

speaking. "To make a speech is a knack ;" to read an audience is another knack.

The audience which receives with apathy the lecture or sermon which another audience applauded is apt to irritate the speaker. It seems so unreasonable, and is so unexpected. Nevertheless, nothing is to be gained and everything to be lost by betraying your chagrin. Keep it to yourself. Make the best of a bad audience. The solution of the enigma lies in some atmospheric or mesmeric conditions which are beyond the reach of science, and you may as well give it up first as last. Grin and bear it, and try it again.

Never show annoyance before an audience. Preachers have lost their pulpits, lawyers their cases, and lecturers their second invitation in consequence of speaking unadvisedly with their lips. "Little boy," said the preacher, "if you don't stop see-sawing your head I'll come down there and cut it off." He wished one minute after, and has wished all his life since, that he had allowed the youngster to see-saw to his head's content. Better that the boy should kill the sermon than the preacher should kill himself. The teeth of one lecturer were set on edge by the interruptions of an inebriated hearer, and the audience applauded the lecturer. But the lecturer, not content with his victory, alluded again and still again to the interruption long after it had ceased, and the audience turned against the lecturer, who was finally hissed.

Never put yourself in the wrong with an audience. It has every advantage of you. It has many heads to your one. Keep your audience on your side in every case of speaker *vs.* some one hearer. This is where the speaker needs self-restraint and tact.

**Popular Lec-  
turing.**

What do you think of popular lecturing as a business



or profession? I see it is sometimes described by a newspaper as "played out."

Yes, occasionally a newspaper says, in its haste, "lecturing is played out," and yet in that very issue there may be advertisements of three or four courses of lectures in full blast and paying well. Boston, New York, and Philadelphia average about one hundred lectures each a year. There were more lectures delivered last season in this country than during any previous season—probably three thousand in all.

"Played out" is the cynic's cant. Lecturing is played out just as newspapering is played out, or wall-papering, or school-teaching, or M.D.-ing, or preaching, or lawyering—some of those who are engaged in it have played out, or are playing out, or will play out. That is all there is of that.

If any branch of human industry is indestructible, it is public speaking; and no branch of public speaking is less likely to become extinct, while the human epiglottis survives, than lecturing. It is the oldest method of public instruction, and if any method of public instruction becomes extinct, it will not be lecturing. It is far more likely to be competitive cramming, or the wonderful "marking system." The university grew out of the lecture, and continues to be dependent upon it. Law, medicine, theology, science, and philosophy are taught by means of it, because it is the best means of teaching them.

There are 136 lecturers at Munich and 118 at Göttingen.

What is known as "popular lecturing" is the same thing with a difference, as this most ancient, and most powerful, and most satisfactory of all the methods of public education. It degenerates, of course, into mere

amusement on the one side, and evaporates into mere mist and fog on the other, and therefore gets itself sneered at by some for being frivolous, and laughed at by others for being metaphysical, and described by all as "played out."

Why, even bad lecturing is not played out. The shallowest sham succeeds in this, as in every other department of North American ingenuity. So does the flattest kind of humor. A notoriety in any other walk of life draws and pays in this. A veteran politician whose political luck has "retired" him, a coiner of jests in bad spelling, or an æsthete and his two calves, will find the towns so numerous, and public curiosity so curious, that he can lay up quite a snug sum before he is found out. Once round and he is in funds. Once round takes, say, about five years, and three thousand dollars a year would be fifteen thousand dollars.

Our esteemed contemporaries may set it down for a fact that the lecture business, like the newspaper business, is largely dependent upon its management. When that plays out, in either department, "all is lost except honor." But if either can run without management, it is not the newspaper. For, come what may, the art of the lecturer is absolutely indestructible.

## IX.

### HOW TO THINK OF SOMETHING TO SAY.

THE public speaker can have no more faithful self-discipline than that which comes of his thinking of something to say to his audience. It is not thinking of something to say in a book or an essay, in a magazine or newspaper article, it is thinking of something suitable and effective to say when you get upon your legs before an audience. Nor does it matter whether you are going to write down what you have thought out and commit it, or whether you intend to write and read, or whether your plan is to make your speech out of what you have thought of beforehand and what you will think of on the occasion. It is the great faculty of improvisation which Quintilian makes so much of, and which is one of the most useful and fruitful faculties a public speaker can bring into subjection to his will. It is the art of extempore thinking as well as speaking.

As the public speaker should always be a student in public speaking, he will always be at work with all his will, energy, and memory, and his ear for rhetoric and elocution, improvising and extemporizing; he will always be thinking of something to say to the audience or audiences which he expects to address.

An editorial friend says: "I never come upon a thought, fact, or incident without asking myself how I can get an article out of it." The speaker asks: How

**Always Think-  
ing in Private  
of Something  
to Say in Pub-  
lic.**

shall I utilize it for my audience? He should be the most alert-minded man in the world. He should get into the habit of picking up something from everybody, and everything and everywhere. A robin should not be more indefatigable in gathering insects for her young. He should have the Dickens eye for seeing everything, and the Dickens knack for turning everything to account.

He will say : Here is an incident. I'll tell it to my audience, but first I'll tell it to myself. So he goes over it mentally, silently, thoughtfully. He tells it to himself in the very best words he can command. He seeks to make a gem of effective simplicity out of it, a bit of good painting done at a stroke or two. It is this doing your narrative or descriptive at a dash or two that tells, and it is this that you learn how to do in learning how to think of something to say. The more you do at it in this conscious, disciplinary way, the sooner it will come easy and the easier it will become.

The memory gets its culture out of this rehearsal. I repeat that the best improvisations are improvised beforehand. The best impromptu speeches are committed to memory. The difficulty is to remember the something that you have thought of to say. The premeditated felicity cannot be recalled on the occasion of the address. Thackeray thought of his best things in the cab on his way home from his speech, during which he could not recall them to save his life. My latest failure in this line of human endeavor is so recent as to be still poignant. I could hardly have made such a fist of my part at the laying of the corner-stone, if I had had laid in me the corner-stone which I am trying to lay in the coming public speakers. This exacting and unremitting self-discipline in learning how to think of something to say

will prevent this failure of memory, if anything will. It is a training that includes the memory as well as the will, the judgment, and the ear for rhetoric.

You will have this thinking habit in action while you are listening to other speakers. You will note their vocabulary, their illustrations, what takes and what falls flat. You may be surprised to find that there are some admirable and handy words which you

**Thinking for  
Yourself while  
Listening to  
Others.**

never use, and some forms of public address which you have never tried. This is not "forgetting yourself, and thinking only of your subject." This is the thinking of yourself which gives you power over yourself. Forget anybody but yourself, your best self, the self which the Prodigal Son came to when he came to himself, and which every man must come to if he would come to anything. Remember only to get rid of your other self, your self of silly bumptiousness, your flap-and-crow oratorical vanity, and all that species of consciousness which is always putting in its thumb and pulling out its plum, and saying, What a great man am I! The serious and conscientious public speaker, who is under training for his art, despises all that sort of consciousness, and rolls it as a sweet morsel under his—feet. Forget anybody but yourself, but forget nobody. Remember everybody. In thinking of something to say, to your hearers, think especially of your hearers.

Thinking of the audience is indispensable in learning how to address it—with what method and rhetoric.

**Thinking of  
the Audience  
while Thinking  
of Something  
to Say to It.**

"He was tedious." That was because he "forgot himself, and thought only of his subject." In forgetting himself he forgot his hearers, or he would not have closed their ears with

weariness. Nor could it be complained that "he fires over their heads," if he did not forget them in forgetting himself. Self-discipline and training would have taught him that firing over their heads will never win their hearts. Moreover, the method is no compliment to the man who resorts to it. Nothing is easier than to bamboozle an audience with the vocabulary of books which they never read; on the other hand, "how much learning it requires to make these things plain." Here is where education gets its raps, and deserves them. When one of the "self-made" hits the mark, and one of the "educated" hits only the target, there is a hurrah for the self-made and a groan for education. Self-made thought of his audience, Education thought only of his subject. Consciousness of the audience is indispensable to the right treatment of the subject. Why prepare sermons for the other man's congregation?

This rigid, exacting, and unremitting discipline bears fruit when the speaker is detailed to make a short speech at short notice. A better opportunity he could not have or a more valuable lesson in his difficult art.

He is the rare speaker who knows how to hit the purpose of the occasion in a brief speech. The best of orators and advocates fail here. All of us have time to make a long sermon; few have time, or will take time, to make a short one. Any one might make the ten-minutes' speech, if he were allowed ten minutes in which to get under way. But to throw it off without prelude or apology or hesitation—this is just one of those attainments in the art of being natural which is as unusual as the discipline and training that compass it.

But we should sometimes leave our speech to the



occasion, or what is called "the inspiration of the moment," should we not?

Of course you may have to; but suppose the occasion fails to inspire, but, on the contrary, is so contrary as to take away your speech instead of giving you one? To provide against this contingency is the object of the discipline and training that come of thinking of something to say. Furthermore, this training is indispensable, if we would know how to make the most of the occasion, whether inspiring or dispiriting. The more there has been of this mental preparation for the occasion, and for all similar occasions, the more the occasion will yield in the way of inspiration and suggestion.

Will not the audience compel us to think of something to say when we stand before it? Yes. A man whom no conversation can get a word out of will be voluble before an audience. Some men think of nothing except when they get upon their legs to speak, and in the case of some they think of nothing then. It is a knack to make a taking speech with nothing in it.

But the audience disconcerts the diffident and emboldens the bold. It will fill the mouth of the conceited, and tie the tongue of the modest. The most experienced of speakers suffer from audience fright. There is no better remedy for this than the habit of keeping your hearers in mind while you are thinking of something to say to them. To realize their presence by an effort of the imagination is to fortify against their faces in the flesh.

One of our Commencement orators said to me while his predecessor was speaking: "I am shaking in my shoes; how shall I get over my nervousness?" Summon your conceit, your sense of superiority to the mass of towns-people, pretty girls and their undergraduates, who

make up the audience. Look them square in the face, and say to yourself, and say it resolutely : " I will not be put down." That mental action will hold you up.

The student did indeed think of the audience, but he thought too highly of it. He overestimated its intelligence. He did indeed think of himself, but he thought too modestly of himself. He is that uncommon kind of student. He underestimated his ability to cope with the undergraduates and their parents. His panic came, after all, of not thinking correctly of himself and his audience. The audience capitulated as soon as he showed that he considered himself its master. This lion in our path will lower his tail, if we only look him in the eye.

And it is this looking an audience in the eye that the young speaker needs to practise. There is no substitute for it.

" Don't do your practising on an audience," an old preacher tells the young preachers. On whom shall they do their practising, then, their looking-glass ? The old preacher practised on an " imaginary audience."

**Learn to Face  
an Audience by  
Facing it.**

But a real audience is the best. The realer the young speaker makes his audience the realer he will be himself, his subject, his delivery, his object and all. You will never learn how to think and speak and behave before an audience of men and women by practising before an audience of bedposts or apple-trees.

Few have the industry for this unreal rehearsal work. We are all as lazy as circumstances will permit. We do only what we are compelled to do. You must put yourself under the necessity of making a real speech to a real audience. Besides, the real audience awakens and flatters the ambition as nothing else does or can. If the speech

is not made in public it is not public speaking, and public speaking is what you are trying to learn.

A setter of the preachers to rights says : “ The principles of the art of oral address should have been mastered by the preacher before he has authority to enter the pulpit.” As well say the principles of the art of mastication should be mastered before the boy is allowed to eat. There are no principles of the art of oral address aside from the oral address itself. To separate the principles from the practice is to make both useless. “ Grammar was made after language, and therefore ought to be taught after language.” Elocution was made with language ; it should be taught, not before or after, but with the language, the very language we use in speaking, not the language of another on another occasion.

Did not Demosthenes practice in a cave ? Yes, but that was with gravel in his mouth, to cure an impediment of speech. If you have a defect that requires gravel in the mouth, by all means do your practising in a cave ; and if you are taking lessons in instrumental music at the same time, take your piano with you.

Carlyle was about right when he said : “ The public speaker is as the ass whom you took and cast headlong into the water. The water at first threatens to swallow him, but he finds to his astonishment that he can swim therein, that it is buoyant and bears him along. One sole condition is indispensable—audacity, vulgarly called impudence. Our donkey must commit himself to his watery element, in free daring strike forth his four limbs from him. Then shall he not drown and sink, but shoot gloriously forward and swim, to the admiration of the bystanders. The ass, safe landed on the other bank, shakes his rough hide, wonder-struck himself at the faculty that lay in him, and waves joyfully his long ears !

So, too, the public speaker !” The great Thomas was not much of a public speaker, but he did know how to wave joyfully his long ears. You will never learn how to behave, or speak, or think before an audience until you appear before one. Commit yourself. You will never learn how to swim unless you plunge in and strike out.

Never wait till the subject is ripe before you pluck it. Pluck it and ripen it. While you are waiting for it to ripen, somebody else will secure it. Be quick to not only “take a hint,” but to utilize it. A suggestion grows with nursing. You will be surprised to find how rapidly you acquire knowledge of that which you were heretofore utterly ignorant, by imparting what you know to others. Teaching teaches the teacher. If you would learn any branch of knowledge, take a pupil in it. You will many a time, like Rousseau with his love letter, “begin your speech without knowing what you are going to say, and end without knowing what you have said,” and yet what you have said may be very much the thing you should have said. Many a sermon that is a blank to its preacher was effective with its hearer.

However, while a real audience is the best audience, it need not be the only one. An unreal one by all means if you have no other, or are afraid to face the other yet. Rehearsal is as invaluable to the speaker as it is to the singer or actor. And it is all the more useful for being aloud, or “in cold blood,” as Walpole said when he was asked by the Kit-kat Club to rehearse the speech he intended to make against the expulsion of Steele from the House. He said “it was impossible to deliver a speech in cold blood, but he would try.” He did try, and succeeded. He made a good speech to the club, and a better one in the Commons. Undoubtedly the speech in the House was far better for having been rehearsed

at the club. But the first audience was not unreal, it was only less real than the second.

It is wonderful how the simply knowing that you have a speech to make will help you to create it. Your trying to think of something to say seems fruitless. But you will find that it is not fruitless. That silent, fruitless concentration was concentration, nevertheless. You did not realize that it was, but it was, and your speech or sermon was the better for it. The sudden burst of something to say when the occasion comes for it is the fruit of the unpromising and apprehensive effort. The very apprehension helped. The apprehensive temperament is like nervousness, bad for one's happiness, but good for one's speaking.

**Making a  
Speech by  
Promising One.**

During the preparation you should shave yourself, or read some in a well-written book, or do an errand for your wife, or make a call and have a chat, or take a frolic with the children. It is positively funny to observe how underneath all this the mind is trying to think of something to say, and will not be diverted from its purpose, and is actually assisted by the diversion.

This importunity of his work should be the preacher's advantage. Two sermons every one hundred and sixty-eight hours constitute quite an upper and a nether millstone for grinding something to say out of him. And yet the advantage may easily become a disadvantage. Prodding, while it quickens some, deadens others. They give up after a round or two, and the rest of their work is the veriest humdrum. Subjecting yourself to the training and discipline of thinking of something fresh and appetizing to say will prevent this fatal panic. Give yourself exclusively to thinking of something to say, and you will have no time to think of how much you have

to say. The most fertile preachers have the sense of running dry, in which their congregations sometimes share.

Putting yourself under obligation to be on hand with something to say is a great aid in learning how to think of something to say. Give your note for it. Then bestir yourself to raise the wind.

While you are thinking of something to say you will be surprised and delighted to observe how every speech that you hear, and every book that you pick up, and every conversation you have, and every newspaper you read will contribute something to your budget of material. Then you must not fail to make use of this material, whether exactly to your liking or not. Do your best with the best that comes to you. When better comes, substitute it, but until it comes work up and work off the material you have on hand. You will do better next time by doing your best this time.

It is not necessary while you are thinking of something to say that you should "read up" on the subject of your address. You may not be able to find anything of that kind to read. Read the best English language you can find. Read, write, and converse in the best vocabulary that comes to you, and compel a better vocabulary to come to you. There is always room for improvement in the words of our mouths. Reading, writing, and conversing with this under-thinking going on creates facility and felicity in the use of language in public. The memory becomes charged with words, images, metaphors, ideas, and phrases that press for utterance under the stimulus of the occasion or the excitement of ambition. Try it.



## X.

### THE RIGHT SHAPE FOR AN AUDIENCE-ROOM.

SUCH paragraphs as these frequently appear in the newspapers, and they contain no more disheartening or inexcusable bit of news.

“There are at least a dozen churches, some in Brooklyn, some in New York, some in Boston, in Springfield and in Chicago, each costing over \$200,000, that are utterly worthless as places of worship.”

“Externally, Tompkins Avenue Church is beautiful to look at. It is cruciform in style, florid Gothic in design, and ornamented to the very spire. The building and furnishing are said to have cost a quarter of a million. Nobody can fill the house, for nobody can speak in it or hear in it. The roof looks like the headquarters of a telegraph company. Bunches of telegraph-wires run lengthwise and crosswise of the church. It was thought that these would break the echo. The platform has been brought into the centre of the church, and a screen put in the rear to aid the sound of the voice, but with little success. Architects now say that the interior of the church must be entirely changed, galleries put in, floor raised, ceiling altered; in other words, a new church internally must be constructed.”

The late President Finney said of the Broadway Tabernacle: “The plan of the interior of that house was my own. I had observed the defects of churches in regard

to sound, and was sure that I could give the plan of a church in which I could easily speak to a much larger congregation than any house would hold that I had seen." His experience with the architects was exactly like that described by those who planned the sensible interior of the Brooklyn Tabernacle: they haughtily refused to sacrifice their sublime art to the exigencies of acoustics. "An architect was consulted, and I gave him my plan. But he objected to it, that it would not appear well, and feared that it would injure his reputation to build a church with such an interior as that. I told him that if he would not build it on that plan he was not the man to superintend its construction at all. It was finally built in accordance with my ideas, and was a most comfortable place to speak in."

My experience confirms the popular complaint of ecclesiastical acoustics.

Just before ascending the pulpit stairway of one of these "utterly worthless places" of public worship, the noble martyr of the place took me aside and warned me against the slightest variation to the right or left during my lecture. I must stand stock still and look straight before me. If I did not, if I turned one inch to the right or left, I would hear whispers enough to tell the secrets of all mankind. Of course I thanked the parson and—did just what he told me not to do! I was all curiosity to hear the whispers. Whispers! If all the snakes of all the Zoological Gardens had hissed upon me then and there, I am sure I could not have been more startled than I was by those echoes that rushed upon me from every direction.

We are going to remedy it, and have been going to remedy it for five years, and will be going to remedy it

Echoes to  
Right of Him,  
Echoes to Left  
of Him.

for five or twenty-five years more. I dare say it could be remedied for five dollars. How far should a preacher go in the toleration of such stumbling-blocks? I would rather preach under a tree, especially if there were light enough from the conflagration of that house of God to read for the lesson of the evening: "Lay aside every weight," etc.

Recently I undertook to deliver a course of lectures in an elegant new hall which had just cost the taxpayers about \$12,000, and was obliged to succumb to the snakes after the first lecture. Wires were tried without avail—a remedy which has been, I believe, generally abandoned. We had to quit the chapel of a college in another town for the same reason. A church which cost the hard earnings of a village congregation to the extent of about \$16,000, only two years ago, behaves in the same way. Fancy the outlook of that congregation. Imagine the consequences of a reputation of that kind attached to a church, one of whose wisest members said to me: "We would gladly exchange the new house for the old barn if we could." In several towns I was told that the sale of season lecture tickets was seriously interfered with by the inability to hear in the hall or church. In some cases the money had to be refunded, and in one case at least the course came to an abrupt end, because the ticket-holders refused to attend where it was so difficult to hear. "We shall not try it again until we have a new hall," says the president of the lecture committee of one of the best lecture towns in the State.

**The Shape Re-  
quired by the  
Laws of Acous-  
tics.**

The remedy for the consequences of violating a natural law is obedience to that law. The laws of acoustics are, it is true, not all easy of access and understanding; but

some of them are. For example, it seems evident that the sound goes off from the speaker's mouth in vibrations similar to the waves created by the stone thrown into the water—circular if it can, semi-circular if it must. Hence the semi-circular, or horse-shoe form of auditory, to compel the vibrations to take that form; and hence there should be nothing to prevent their taking that form. Again, the voice of the speaker will fill, or try to fill, the entire space of the place in which he speaks, be it small or large, round or square or oblong, high roofed or low roofed, whether bristling with angles and projections or bounded by a uniform and smooth concave surface, whether abundant in alcoves and recesses or entirely free from them. As it will go out doors if you leave the doors open, or through the roof if you leave a hole in it, so it will find its way to every open space within the edifice where wall and roof and door prevent its escape. In short, the voice of the speaker, like the wind, goeth where it listeth, and can only be prevented from going where it is not wanted by being compelled to go where it is wanted. It will go where it is wasted unless you force it to go where it is wanted. It is wasted if it rambles into recesses or vestibules, or lofty arches, or acute angles of the church, since it is wanted only in the pews.

Manifestly, then, the fewer of such places there are for the speaker's voice to waste itself in, the more expeditious it will be in reaching the places it is designed to fill, and the more effective it will be when it does reach them. The voice will scatter much or little, or none, according as you provide a place or places for it to scatter in. Restrain it to the place and space which contains your audience.

Again, the waves of sound naturally rise as they pass

from the speaker's mouth. They go up of themselves, so to speak ; they go down by compulsion. They require little more than mere utterance to send them above you ; they require positive exertion to send them below you. The notes of the bugle are heard more distinctly on the tops of the houses than on the street. "From peak to peak leaps the live thunder." The valleys have but a faint share in the awful reverberations. The pit, or the ground floor, is the worst place in the house for hearing either the speaker, actor, or singer. The reason is obvious. Sound, especially articulate sound, goes below its utterer reluctantly and resentfully, but goes above him cheerfully and with alacrity.

The Speaker  
Should be Be-  
low Instead of  
Above the  
Audience.

The hearer should be above instead of below the speaker. The seats should rise as they recede from the rostrum or pulpit, if speaking and hearing without an effort is an object worth attaining. The superabundance of exertion used by the speaker comes of his being obliged to force his voice down the hypotenuse of a right-angle triangle. He stands at the top instead of, as a law of acoustics requires, at the bottom of the hypotenuse. He has the wear and tear of shouting from the summit of the hill to those at the base, instead of having the pleasure of talking without exertion from its base to those on its summit or its sides. This horse-shoe rising seat form, which was invariably adhered to by the ancients, and has been perpetuated by the architects of theatres to this day, was doubtless suggested by the out-door experience of public assemblies. They gathered on the sides of the hill, and the speaker stood at the bottom. Whoever has spoken in a theatre or opera-house knows how much easier and more agreeable it is to speak there than

in a church, and whoever has been a listener to both sermon and drama will note how easy it is to hear even the bungled whispers of the actors, and how difficult it is to catch the words of the most painstaking preacher.

Again, every hearer should be able to see the speaker, since seeing him plainly is indispensable to hearing him distinctly and understanding him perfectly. This is self-evident and needs no argument; but it needs iteration and reiteration. “My

The Speaker  
and Hearer  
Should See  
Each Other.

people will not consider,” or they would not be carried away by a pretty “elevation,” without considering whether it is rational or absurd with reference to the all-important matter of hearing and speaking. It is impossible for one half of the people on the level floor of our churches to see their preacher without twisting their heads, which is one of the universal “bodily exercises” of our Sunday congregations. And if you lean aside you are sure to obstruct the view of some fellow-listener, who must also change his position in order to do what the architect should have enabled him to do without leaning to the right or left—look the speaker full in the face. In a properly constructed semi-circular auditory, a straight line could be drawn from the mouth of the speaker to the eye of every hearer, without going through anybody’s head. This can be done if the proper gradations are observed in the elevation of the floor, and the proper proportions are obtained in the construction of the semi-circular or horse-shoe form. When these gradations and proportions are secured, the speaker will be able to look every one of his hearers square in the eyes without turning his face to the right hand or to the left—which, by the way, is one of the bad habits of preachers.



The platform pulpit of this country is immensely superior to the lofty tubs of Great Britain, but one considerable step more will have to be taken before the American pulpit is constructed with reference to the pew according to the laws of acoustics. The American preacher is still at the wrong end of the hypotenuse, and still has some excuse for resorting to the bellow and yell in the utterance of passages which should be spoken in a colloquial tone. But whether he is excusable for submitting to the oblong, level-floored form of audience-room in which he is to preach is another question. He certainly ought to know that the more exertion he is obliged to use in making himself heard, the less he will have with which to make himself felt. He should have the full use of his faculties and powers without drag or embarrassment from the ill-construction or malformation of the place in which he speaks. There should be nothing in the form or shape of the auditory calculated to prevent what the speaker has to say from being spoken and heard with perfect ease. The lowest conversational tones should be heard as distinctly in a church as in a theatre; and they will be when (as in the case of the Brooklyn Tabernacle) the auditory of the church is constructed on the same principles as that of the theatre. In the old countries the university and scientific lecture rooms are all constructed in this raised-seat form, and so are a few halls in this country; but in the case of several modern churches and halls, there is the merest beginning. The reform has only learned to creep. It will be a long while before it will be able to walk erect and show itself equal to the task of confronting one of the most perverse of perversities.

Architecture  
Should not be  
an Obstruction  
to Public  
Speaking.

The speaker should stand with his back, as near as may be, to a solid wall, between the calks of the horse-shoe.

**Hard Walls.** Indeed, one of the most important of the conditions for easy hearing and easy speaking is, that the walls of the auditory should be constructed of stone, the thicker the better. Wooden walls are resonant, especially when they are hollow, as is the case with lath-and-plaster walls. The surface of the wall should be plain stone, which sheds the sound without absorbing or mangling it. Of course it may be said wooden walls "will do." Yes, anything "will do;" wooden heads will do, a wall made of drums laid side to side will do—so will a tin pan roofed in, if it is big enough. We are not talking about what will do—or rather we are talking about, and against, what will "do" the speaker, or preacher, by tearing his throat, and wearing his nerves, and prematurely bringing on the "Whereas it has pleased Divine Providence," etc.

Furthermore, this amphitheatre (which means "to see about") and rising-seat form of auditory, which enables the hearer to see and hear the preacher equally well in all parts of the church, leaves all the pews equally eligible and desirable, and prevents that enormous difference in their "valuation," which is so common in churches where the rich meet together. In some of these oblong, level-floored churches one third the seats are simply unendurable, and, so far from wondering why they are never, the wonder is that they are ever rented.

**The Play-  
house Right,  
God's House  
Wrong.**

The audience-room of the house of God is constructed in impudent defiance of His laws of acoustics, while the playhouse is constructed in obedience to those laws. A conversational tone may be heard in any part of the

ness—must be, indeed, or the drama fails ; and the failure of ordinary colloquial cadences in a church is a failure of a fundamental element in all public speaking—the colloquial element.

No comedian would endure, in the way of a wearing-tearing audience-room, for one evening, what preachers will bear with and die of every Sunday, year in and year out ; and the ordaining clergy, together with all the solemn divines who launch the theological graduates, and the entire bureau of anonymous advisers of the parsons, yea, and the whole noble army of pulpit martyrs may continue to iterate and reiterate their panacea of “ Be in earnest,” and “ Be natural,” until Gabriel’s trumpet shall wake the dead, and not one building committee or church will awake even then to a sense of their responsibility for these stumbling-blocks to the Gospel.

Let us hope that the day will come when building committees, and churches that are put in trust with the Gospel, and preachers whose very lives are at stake, will not allow themselves to be ensnared by the “ Gothic ” nonsense of a “ florid ” architect, but will insist, first of all, and last of all, that it shall be at least as easy to hear and see where the Gospel is preached, as where the comedian splits the ears of the groundlings, and the minstrels dance in clogs.

To recapitulate :

I. The horse-shoe form, with the speaker between the calks. Recapitulation.

II. No angles or recesses or projections before, behind, or behind the speaker.

III. The seats so elevated and graduated as to put the speaker in full view of every hearer, and every hearer in full view of the speaker, without his being obliged to change his position.

The harder the walls the better for articulate sound ; but as stone and brick are often out of the question, there is no need of worrying over their absence. But the absence of these three conditions, or any one of them, is a sin to be repented of and forsaken in the sight of God.

The lower the ceiling the better, and the less waste space in it the better. If you have a vast and lofty ceiling without galleries, the audience will hear better seated on the under side of the roof than on the upper side of the floor. The echo in an audience-room is the jeer of science at the perversity of man. It says, Ha ! ha ! where is now their God of acoustics !

THE END.









